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FORM AND FIGURE: AN INQUIRY INTO THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE BALLAD IN OLD PROVENÇAL, OLD FRENCH, AND MIDDLE ENGLISH

by

Artur Bohnet

©

A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled FORM AND FIGURE: AN INQUIRY INTO THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE BALLAD IN OLD PROVENÇAL, OLD FRENCH, AND MIDDLE ENGLISH submitted by ARTUR BOHNET in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature.

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ABSTRACT

The term "form" in this study refers to the blend of narrative, dialogue and description which occurs in a group of medieval poems and which coincides, as well, with the Romantic concept of the ballad.

By "figure" is meant the formal principle which ties together those three modes in the earliest known ballad-like poems. It specifically refers to the arrangement of words, images, ideas, and to some extent rhythm, in a pattern of axial symmetry within a fairly short poem.

Most of the poems discussed have previously been assigned to one or more of the following genres: _chanson d'histoire_, _chanson de la mal-mariée_, _carole_, _pastourelle_, _rondeau_ or _rotrouenge_, to name only the more generally used terms. Reading them as ballads helps to avoid either a narrowly thematic or a narrowly formal interpretation. One of the primary purposes of this inquiry is thus to examine closely the poems in their own right.

A second purpose is to situate this group in the history of literary forms. The figure of the circle is essential in this regard in that, on the one hand, it distinguishes the poems generically from the narrative fragment and, on the other hand, it relates them to the love _chanson_.

In the earliest of the poems, the Provençal "A l'entrade del tens clar," the figure of the circle coincides with the background and action of a round dance. This poem is important as the only text that would support the Provençal etymology of the English word "ballad" and its connection to the idea of dancing.

The study concludes with an exploration of the possibility that not only the English word "ballad," but also the form of the English ballad may have Provençal and French origins. A thirteenth-century English poem is examined for its formal and thematic connections to the French poems.

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INTRODUCTION

The object of this study is to examine a selection of Provençal and Old French poetic forms and a middle English poem, in which a number of ballad-type characteristics play a major structural and thematic role. One of the characteristics is the blend of narrative, dialogue and description in a fairly short poem usually identified as ballad form. The term "figure" singles out for the first time in this paper a formal characteristic of the French and Provençal poems. It designates the arrangement of words, ideas and -- to some extent, rhythms -- in a pattern of axial symmetry within a poem or individual stanzas. The discovery of these ballad features is of significance, because the ballad proper is traditionally seen to have had its beginnings in the fifteenth century. William Paden Ker observed that "with the exception of Judas (thirteenth century) there is nothing in Child older than the fifteenth century (Stephen and Robin and Gandelyn). Nor are there earlier documents in other countries."[1] Thus, the premise that there were English, Provençal or French ballads in the thirteenth century pushes back the history of the genre by a century and a half. That these Provençal and Old French poetic forms have elements in common with the ballad defies, also, the convention by which they have been clearly divided into such distinct genres as chanson d'histoire, chanson de la mal-mariée, and pastourelle.[2] Helen E. Sandison, having noted considerable parallels between Romanzen and the pastourelles, categorizes them as one genre. She fails, however, to identify them with the ballad, choosing her own term of chanson d'aventure.[3]

While an approach of this sort contributes to the study of ballad origins, it is also expected that reading the medieval poems as one would read a ballad, can bring them closer to our understanding.

This thesis is a study in genre and form. I will not begin with a strict definition of the ballad, and attempt to fit other poetic forms into that definition. Not only would such a method be dishonest, it would be self-defeating. The significance of this method is the assertion of the fluidity of forms and techniques which ultimately reshape themselves into the genre we now know as the ballad. This approach is not to narrow a poetic form into a tight structure, but rather to point out the dynamics of its shape. I must move warily, and suggest rather than affirm conclusions. For my purpose, a small selection of examples which can be studied in detail and from several angles is more illuminating than a long list of songs and genre types that could only, at best, be summarized and appropriately categorized. This method, in other words, is to observe inductively the formal structure and thematic basis of a small but carefully chosen number of poems representing the major pre-ballad poetic forms, the dancing song, the chansons d'historire, the carole, the chanson de la mal-mariée, and the pastourelle. These examples are not only analyzed individually, but are also compared with each other in their individual handling of ethical principles and structure, and in their complex handling of the balance between the two.

The first chapter is devoted to the analysis of two Provençal dancing songs, "A l'entrade del tens clar"[4] and "kalenda maia," the latter appearing within the Provençal romance of *Flamenca*.[5] As the romance informs us, the song is performed by a group of young women on the night of the first of May. Perhaps this is evidence of an old custom. But while the date of the song's performance may not be without significance, a more valuable point of information is its chronological and psychological position in the narrative. "A l'entrade" and *Flamenca* will be discussed first because they appear to be the least removed from troubadour love as it is expressed in the courtly *chansons*. While the dating of untitled and anonymous songs can at best be of a tentative nature, there is some reason to suppose that "A l'entrade" is the oldest extant ballad. Yet, poetically and linguistically it occupies a middle position. It is recorded in only one manuscript amongst a collection of Old French songs and in a curious mixture of French and Provençal, and yet it presents its theme with a point of view that, as will be discussed in Chapter i, is conspicuously Provençal. Yet if, as this would seem to indicate, the ballad as a form was a creation of southern France, it is somewhat astonishing to see how rarely it occurs in Provençal and how often it occurs in French poetry. A preliminary explanation might be that the ballad provided for the Provençal troubadours an occasional chanson diversion, whereas in the north the ballad became an autonomous art form. Formal and thematic criteria substantiate the theory that the ballad form was created predominantly in the south, yet a chronology of development is nearly impossible to establish. Even where a work may be dated with some certainty, it is a considerable accomplishment to narrow down the date of composition to within a range of twenty-five years more or less. Assuming "A l'entrade" was composed around 1200, Guillaume de Dôle[6] in the first third of the thirteenth century, and the last text studied in this thesis, "De Clerico et Puella,"[7] after 1250, the examples are presented here in an approximate chronological order.

In the second chapter, I discuss a sampling of Old French ballads which appeared for the first time as a group in the form of lyrical insertions in the Romance de la Rose ou de Guillaume de Dôle. Here the question of popular poetry and primitivism is introduced. Whatever may be naive and simple in these songs cannot be interpreted as evidence that they were created by simple minds, for they are characterized by an extreme, almost esoteric, structural and rhetorical finesse of the form, which already occurs in the oldest examples. It is their smooth beginning, seemingly out of nothing, their laconic but plausible story and natural closure which make them appear uncontrived, yet all these are signs of what proves on closer examination to be a skilful poetic technique. Did the poet attempt to mask his skill or would the quality of his poetic talent be recognizable to his patrons and colleagues on the basis of a convention of simplicity? Such a convention, based on primitivist ideas, is manifest in these ballads. Since the _artes poeticae_ of the time say nothing about this primitivist stream, it is vital to elucidate it in the narrative context of _Guillaume de Dôle_, as a key to the understanding of thirteenth-century ballads. The romance, interesting enough by itself, is useful in still another way. Not only are these ballads (_chansons d'histoire_) placed in a more elaborate life cycle than could be developed within the short songs standing alone, but they are also placed in confrontation with other lyric forms. The most noteworthy of these are the _carole_, closely related to the ballad, and the _chanson_. Since all these songs, as will be seen, are organically integrated within the plot, it is instructive to analyze the manner in which the ambiances of _chanson d'histoire_, _carole_ and _chanson_ relate to each other. Because the ballad and the _chanson_ are somewhat akin to each other, the degree of relatedness or difference between them determines to a large extent the place of the ballad in courtly poetics. While the study of Guillaume de Dôle does much to elucidate this relationship, it is necessary at this point to clarify ballad chronology and geography as a preliminary to a discussion of the lyric.

Chansons with strong narrative or dramatic components occur sporadically since the earliest beginnings of the form. It is characteristic of the early Provençal examples, however, that either the dramatic or the narrative element is developed at the expense of the other. In Guillaume IX's "Farai un vers, pos mi sonelh," the "I" protagonist plays deaf when encountered by two love-hungry women, thereby precluding an argument;[8] in the Provençal *pastourelles* since Marcabru almost all is dialogue,[9] the limited amount of narrative only serving to put the characters in their respective places. Apart from this function, the reported actions in the Provençal *pastourelle* do not influence the course of the dialogue or interior monologue -- the characters do not clash physically.

Not so those Old French songs which could be called ballad types. Reported action, dialogue and glimpses of the hero's mind remain in constant interaction. The wishes of the young pregnant woman, of the mistreated or unsatisfied wife, of the sexually aroused man, are fulfilled--or frustrated--within the song, frequently through physical violence. Thus, a balanced interaction of lyric, narrative and dialogue is achieved at the price of cruelty, invective and violence in the scenes which are portrayed. These songs are several decades later than the first known imitations, in Old French *chansons*, of Provençal models.

Guillaume de Dôle is an important document in ballad history because it contains the first full text of *chanson d'histoire* and the earliest examples of *caroles*. Analyses of "La bele Aiglentine," the *chanson d'histoire*, and "C'est la jus," of the *carole* form, indicate the formal, ethical and social structures of these poems in comparison to those of the Provençal poems examined in Chapter i.

The *caroles* of *Guillaume de Dôle* differ from "A l'entrade" in the nature of the pastoral portrayal, but they differ as well from the later *caroles*, known as the *chansons de la mal-mariée*. In Chapter iii I consider two *mal-mariée* poems, "Soufres, maris,"[10] and "En une präele.[11] These poems display a fascinating fusion of certain structural and thematic elements found in both the Provençal and the earlier Old French examples. In these poems, characterization is reminiscent of the *Chansons à personnages*, and there is a suggestion of narrative and dramatic potential. The theme of the *mal-mariée* songs, on the other hand, indicates a certain relatedness to the dancing songs, while avoiding the imbalance of dramatic and narrative components found in the Provençal pastourelles.

The pastourelle presents an odd imbalance, or seeming imbalance, in poetic tone. The locus amoenus, which is developed in nearly all examples of pastourelle, conflicts with the physical violence of the rape. I have chosen one example, the poem "Quant voi la flor nouvele,"[12] in order to examine in detail this intentional disharmony. Chapter iv is devoted to an analysis of this disharmony.

In the final chapter of the thesis, the ethical problems raised by the pastourelle are seen in the light of literary history. All of the poems discussed in the previous chapters are reviewed in relation to their formal and ethical aspects. The essential features of each are seen to form a definite pattern in development. An early English lyric, "De Clerico et Puella," is then examined in order to demonstrate the adaptation of structural, rather than thematic elements from the French ballad. The lyric in question is not conventionally termed a ballad, yet it stands comparison structurally and thematically with later ballads, while clearly following patterns set by earlier French lyrics. The English lyric, therefore, suggests a starting point in the history of ballad scholarship as well as a natural finishing point in this study of the pre-history of the genre.

In my conclusion, I briefly summarize the change and fusion of ethical and formal aspects in Provençal, Old French and English lyrics in what I see as a gradual development toward the English ballad form.

Certain major areas of inquiry are touched upon in the course of this study. Firstly, the study of the Provençal dancing songs raises the important question of the possible etymological and therefore structural connection between the thirteenth century Provençal term balada and the word ballar, "to dance."[13] Originally, a ballad would have meant a "dancing song," and this meaning, logically enough, keeps attracting scholars to the idea that the ballad owes its distant origin to ritual dancing songs in a more or less primitive society.[14] Is there, however, more to the idea of the ballad's origin in dancing than the mere notion of a technical connection? And, in particular, is that "something" a distinctive and significant feature in individual ballads of the thirteenth century? One would expect to find fairly solid evidence from that epoch concerning an "original" connection between a particular kind of dance and a particular kind of song. For is not *ballada*, the Provençal ancestor of the French *ballade* and the English *ballad*, a word of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries? Without making a lexicological study which, however, is long overdue, for "ballad" and its cognates, it can be said that the Provençal *ballada* cannot be linked to anything very precise in terms of lyrical form or performance. In Old French, the word *balade* occurs as early as the second half of the thirteenth century, but it does not consistently designate a well-defined poetic form before the second quarter of the fourteenth century.[15] This form, which was later transmitted into English in its final shape and known as the *ballade royale*, is strikingly non-narrative and thus hardly analogous either to ballads of the Child type or to those poems which I have designated to be ballads of the thirteenth century. Thus, we find ourselves in the absurd situation where the postulated French/Provençal etymology of an eighteenth-century English word remains obscure, whereas a strikingly similar term is transmitted into English together with the specific poetic form for which it stands.

One possible explanation of the puzzle is, of course, that "ballad" may have been used rather loosely as a song in general, and could then have been transferred to any one genre in particular. But as early as the fourteenth century, the term ballade designates a poem not supplied with a tune, so that one cannot really imagine anybody dancing to it. One fruitful area of poetic speculation, however, is the idea that dance was not conceived in choreographic terms at all, that the original sense of ballad was not understood to be "dancing song," but "poetic dance."[16] It is true that the ballade developed in all likelihood from a thirteenth-century form which is thought to have been accompanied by dancing and which goes by such names as ballete, carole and rondel. Yet the evidence that these songs were danced is extremely scanty. Structural evidence of dance goes far deeper than the mere evidence of a dance accompaniment, however, as indicated by a refrain or burden.[17] There are indications that the round figure of the dance may pervade the whole fabric of a lyric from rhythm to imagery and even, in the early ballad, to its plot.

A second area which is touched on repeatedly in the course of my study is that of the traditional nature of ballads. This is brought to our attention particularly in the context of Guillaume de Dôle, where the lyrical inserts are, supposedly, folk songs out of the past. What purpose , however , do they really serve?

And why this assertion of antiquity? Furthermore, spontaneity of creation, traditionalism in a national and idealistic sense, and group composition are all ideas used in the context of the dancing song of the thirteenth century, the same ideas one tends to associate with the Romantic revival. Yet, (in thirteenth-century France) these creative concepts are tightly interwoven with the structural principle of the round dance. The idea of roundness, or *circularité* in Paul Zumthor's terminology links these lyrics to the more extensively studied courtly love *chanson*. Rhetorical circularity in both the *chanson* and the ballad has a correlative in the seclusion of the poetic idea from the continuity of life.[18] In the *chanson*, there is roundness implicit in the dialogue of the single "I" with himself, but in the ballad, the roundness is created in more concrete terms. In spite of the fact that it centers around one subject, the *chanson* can quickly change themes from the skylark to Narcissus, from Provence to the Holy Land, from the pining lover to the inaccessible lady. But the ballad, where two or more *actants* meet in dialogue, is more confined within one physical locality, such as an isolated pasture, a maiden's bower, a sewing room or the place of a festival. Whereas in the *chanson* the mind roams freely, ideas in the ballad are limited through the contingency and probability of physical gestures and reactions, spatial and temporal proximity. The *chanson* comes closest to the ballad as joc partit where two poets discuss opposite views in an impromptu fashion. Both genres are in dialogue form or contain a dialogue, and in both the physical aspect of love can be very much in the foreground. But there still remains a qualitative difference. It may seem risqué to argue in a joc partit whether the lover, finally having achieved the intimacy and willingness of his lady, would be better off mute than impotent, whether one would agree to first sleep with a toothless old woman in order to earn the lady's favours, or whether it is preferable to go to bed shortly after one's arrival or before one's departure from the lady. But it is vulgar to combine dialogue and reported action in the case of the seduction or rape of an innocent girl. Between the singer, who in this case would see himself in the rôle of the poem's "I," the culprit, and the people who are listening, social dynamics would have to become almost physically acute. One cannot imagine that the audience (about whom we unfortunately know very little) would be a solemn and immobile group of listeners; they would react to the protagonist, either with approval or with censorship. One would expect of the performer at least a tendency to mimic voices and gestures of the poem's characters, perhaps to stretch out his hand while he sings the words of the rebellious wife, "take the ring from my finger." The words "let us dance," thus appearing in a song and animating a fictitious "real life" setting, may well have been interpreted concretely by a responsive audience. We come to the intriguing possibility that concepts of the traditional, spontaneous and communal nature of folk poetry serve structural functions of a rather intricate sort, whatever role they may have played in the actual composition and performance of these poems. Through the ballad, the poet creates a world which, in its interior continuity of place, time and action, gives the illusion of reality.

A third, and very broad area of inquiry is that of the comparative nature of Provençal and Old French literary activity, and the interactions between the two. While the subject is much too large to be treated in detail, certain observations must be made from time to time in this regard. Was Provençal culture more highly developed, and French culture more primitive, when the ballad nucleus wandered north? What was the status of northern and southern lyrics at the time of the first ballads? How did troubadours and trouvères compare each other's achievements? There is hardly any information on these points. Certainly, however, narrative and dramatic lyrics were beginning to play a vital part in the repertoire of the trouvères. They had developed to a stage where they could no longer be considered, as were the chanson, as imitations of Provençal models. The troubadour, Raimon Vidal, states at this time in a much-quoted passage that French is a superior medium for "romances retronxas e pastorelas,"[19] genres which probably designate narrative or dramatic lyrics. Of more importance is the assumption, documented in Guillaume de Dôle, that the first northern ballads were French by origin. Rightly or wrongly, this is significant in endowing the ballad, though less prestigious than the chanson, with the venerability of "traditional" poetry.

A very important topic of inquiry is that of the difference in the love ethic as expressed in Provençal and in Old French poetry. By "ethic" I understand the social rules as they are reflected in the literature of the time. Perhaps the single most significant characteristic which applies to all the examples presented in this thesis and which identifies them loosely as a generic group is the almost physical realization of character. The strong confrontation in these poems of character with dramatic narrative is significant because it is otherwise not common in the poetics of the time, but also because it is an important feature in the later ballads. It is noteworthy, then, that this ballad characteristic has a beginning in the chanson art.

The choice of examples for this study and the choice of critical authority both need some explanation, although they are closely related. Thus, an explanation of the one serves as an explanation of the other.

A history of the ballad genre, per se, would begin primarily with a definition of the ballad and a formal description of those poems now generally accepted to be ballads. A look at the pre-history of the genre, therefore, would be based on an inventory of poems which display one or more ballad characteristics. Scholarly evidence would inevitably follow the same pattern. My study, however, begins at the other end. Rather than working back from the Child ballad, I am working forward from French and Provençal *chansons*. Nor am I choosing poems solely because of their inherent pre-ballad characteristics. I do not intend to produce unmistakeable evidence that the English ballad of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries originated in thirteenth-century France. Such a conclusion would have to follow a very detailed inquiry into a large number of texts throughout the several centuries and languages that lie in between. My question is not how important these thirteenth-century texts are for the English ballad, but how crucial an ingredient the blend of narrative, dialogue and description is for the thirteenth-century poems I am examining.

These ballad characteristics are important in at least two ways. Firstly, they almost entirely dictate the structure of the poems, and one cannot do justice to the texts without paying adequate tribute to them.

Secondly, the inquiry into ballad structure helps to initiate an understanding of a large group of medieval poems from within that group itself. I hope, thereby, to avoid two impasses which have relegated these poems to the periphery of scholarly efforts. These two impasses are, firstly, the designation of poésie populaire and secondly, the artificial confinement of the poems into distinct generic divisions.

The grouping of the poems under the amorphous heading of poésie populaire either defines them as "non-courtly" or draws them into the infelicitous discussion on the origins of the courtly lyric. Does their more down-to-earth, non-courtly manner denigrate them, place them several steps down from the more esteemed "courtly" lyric, or is "non-courtly" to be understood as "pre-courtly," with its implication that it is close to nature and the "people," somehow the basis of the aristocratic love songs? Neither understanding would seem to me to be adequate, since both imply a predominantly historical discussion with a focus outside the poetry itself. The poems are thus seen only in reference either to classical troubadour love ethic or to socio-anthropological speculation. Let us not take a point of view which led a scholar as well read and erudite as Gaston Paris into a blind alley.[20]

Despite the pitfalls of his approach, much is to be learned from the work of Gaston Paris and his contemporaries. With the exception of Peter Dronke in his recent studies, no one since Paris, Karl Bartsch and their students has subjected these lyrics to such a comprehensive study.[21] Whatever critical mistakes they may have made, those scholars deserve credit for having drawn attention to these poems as a group.

While acknowledging the contributions of those scholars, I am not adopting their critical stand-point. In particular I avoid their narrow use of generic terms which are a direct outcome of their socio-economic interpretation of the lyrics. Whenever I use terms such as chanson de la mal-mariée, pastourelle, or chansons d'histoire it is in order to point to themes within that group of poems that contain ballad-like features. I do not use the terms in order to distinguish genres as such.

Few have taken this approach. Peter Dronke, for example does not dwell too much on any rigidly defined genre.[22] Longer ago, but in a more systematic way, Helen E. Sandison first recognized that the mal-mariée poems and the pastourelle could not really be seen as two distinct genres. In the name which she chose for the common genre, chanson d'aventure, it is apparent that she wanted to emphasize the narrative aspect of the poems.[23] Important though the narrative admittedly is, the dialogue, which she overlooked, is also of considerable significance. In fact, the dialogue affects the structure, and,consequently, the impact of the performance, even more than do the narrative and descriptive elements.

For a poetic type to be recognized (by its contemporary audience), as distinct from any other type, that is as a genre, it must satisfy certain expectations of taste. As Erich Köhler has pointed out,[24] the Provençal love chanson and its accompanying love ethic had initial difficulties in gaining a foothold in northern France. But our songs do not belong to this period of early contacts in the second half of the twelfth century, but mostly to the first half of the thirteenth century. The first contacts had been made by then, and the "courtly" idea had become widely distributed and necessarily somewhat popularized.

Chrétien's attempt to incorporate the Provençal love conflict into an explicit narrative context remained uncompleted.[25] Jean Renart, however, succeeds in assimilating it, lyrics and all, into a background of French small-town aristocracy. The idea, not surprisingly, did not remain unchanged, and neither did the lyrics. The romance of Guillaume de Dôle, therefore, will guide us through a bouquet of contemporary songs and give us an approximate understanding of their social function.

For such an approach to be useful, we need a narrative counterpart in the Provençal tradition. To this end, I have chosen the romance of Flamenca, because it incorporates lyrics or chanson situations and adapts them to a narrative background. One of these, called the "Kalenda maia," is similar in content to the Provencal song "A l'entrade del tens clar," which is studied in some detail in the first chapter. The chapters follow, as much as possible, a chronological sequence, since it is generally agreed that southern France was the location of the earliest of these poems.

If the structural similarities between the "ballad" and a sampling of twelfth and thirteenth century songs are far-reaching enough to indicate not only a generic affinity but also a possible historical link, would it be suitable to speculate on the nature of such an historical link? I will be pointing to characteristics in medieval poems which later occur as structural principles in ballads, yet I have advocated caution in asserting a continuous ballad tradition. Such a continuous tradition, however, is not to be definitely rejected, for there is some evidence for its existence. I have underplayed the possibility of a direct link because the validity of my method does not rest on its existence or nonexistence. And whatever the evidence, we can never be sure that we understand medieval poems in the same way a contemporary audience would have understood them. How, then, can we conduct a genre study of medieval texts? If such a study consists mainly in categorizing poetry, the results cannot be very fruitful. But by studying a small sample of formally and thematically related poems, I hope to achieve some of that congruity which Hans Robert Jauss calls "the question-answer relationship as hermeneutic instrument (with) the sequential relationships between problem and solution in literary processes."[26]

FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION

[1] William Paton Ker, "On the History of the Ballads, 1100-1500," *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 4 (1909-1910), 179.

[2] Consider, for example, these two studies of the genres of *pastourelle* and *chanson de la mal-mariée*, respectively: William Doremus Paden, "The Medieval Pastourelle: A Critical and Textual Revaluation" (Diss. Yale, 1971), and Rudolf Dähne, *Die Lieder der Maumariée seit dem Mittelalter* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1933).

[3] Helen E. Sandison, *The Chanson d'Aventure in Middle English*, Bryn Mawr College Monograph Series, No. 12 (Bryn Mawr, Pa.: Bryn Mawr College, 1913), pp.2-3. Helen Sandison took the term from E.K. Chambers in his discussion of English lyrics; see E.K. Chambers and F. Sidgwick, eds., *Early English Lyrics: Amorous, Divine, Moral and Trivial* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1907), p. 266. A great many of the songs gathered by Bartsch under the title "Romanzen" could easily pass for ballads, an idea that Bartsch himself seems to have had, since he uses the term *Romanze* in the sense of its Spanish cognate, which is commonly translated into English as ballad. In fact, Bartsch grouped *pastourelles* and *Romanzen* together in one collection, because "beide ruhen auf volksthümlicher Grundlage und haben volksthümliche Elemente in sich aufgenommen," Karl Bartsch, ed. *Romances et pastourelles françaises des XII^{e} et XIII^{e} siècles* (1870:rpt. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967).

[4] "A l'entrade del tens clar," *Le Chansonnier français de Saint-Germain-des-Prés* (Bibl. Nat. fr. 20050), ed. P. Meyer and G. Raynaud (1892; rpt. New York: Johnson, 1968), folio 82, verso.

[5] *Le Roman de Flamenca*, ed. Ulrich Gschwind, Romanica Helvetica, 86 A & B, 2 vols. (Berne: Franke, 1976).

[6] *Le Roman de la Rose ou de Guillaume de Dôle*, ed. Félix Lecoy, Les Classiques français du moyen âge, No. 9 (Paris: Champion, 1963).

[7] "De Clerico et Puella," *The Harley Lyrics: The Middle English Lyrics of Ms. Harley 2253*, ed. G.L. Brook. Old

and Middle English Texts (Manchester: University Press, 1956), No. 24.

[8] *Guiglielmo IX d'Aquitania: Poesie*, ed. Nicolò Pasero, Instituto di Filologia Romanza dell'Università di Roma: Studi, Testi e Manuali, No. 1 (Modena: S.T.E.M. - Mucchi, 1973), pp. 113-155. Karl Bartsch, in his *Grundriss zur Geschichte der provenzalischen Literatur* (1872; rpt. Genève: Slatkin, 1972), p. 35, classifies this song under "Romanze."

[9] It is the idea of lovemaking, not the act itself, which stands in the foreground in Provencal *pastourelles*. See E. Köhler, "Die Pastourellen des Trobadors Gavaudan," *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift*, 45 (1964), 349: "Marcabru hatte die Richtung gewiesen. Seine eigenwillige Gestaltung des Pastourellenthemas zeitigte die Folge, dass die provenzalische Pastourelle--anders als die französische--nicht mehr aus dem engeren Einflussbereich der höfischen Liebesproblematik und ihrer besonderen Dialektik entlassen wurde."

[10] "Soufres, maris," Bartsch, *Romances et pastourelles*, Part I, 22.

[11] "En une präele," Hans Spanke, ed. *Eine altfranzösische Liedersammlung. Der anonyme Teil der Liederhandschriften KNPX* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1925), No. 52.

[12] Quant voi la flor nouvele," Spanke, No. 7.

[13] OED, "Ballad."

[14] The most comprehensive effort in this direction is the book by Ernst Erich Metzner, *Zur frühesten Geschichte der europäischen Balladendichtung: Der Tanz in Kölbigk*, Frankfurter Beiträge zur Germanistik, No. 14 (Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1972).

[15] Walter Suchier, *Französische Verslehre auf historischer Grundlage*, rev. ed. Rudolf Baehr, Sammlung kurzer Lehrbücher der romanischen Sprachen und Literaturen, No. 14 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1963), p.205.

[16] Paul Zumthor, "De la circularité du chant (à propos des trouvères des XII^{e} et XIII^{e} siècles)," *Poétique*, 1 (1970), 129-140.

[17] The burden, since Bédier, has been regarded as principal textual evidence that a song accompanied a dance and that it belonged to folk tradition. See Joseph Bédier,

"Les plus anciennes danses françaises," *Revue des deux Mondes*, 31 (1906), 398-399: "Comme ces danses n'étaient pas exécutées par des professionnels, mais par des mondains, on ne pouvait compter qu'ils sauraient tous d'avance, et d'un bout à l'autre, les couplets de la chanson de carole; de là ce principe très simple que le conducteur de la danse aura seul à savoir cette chanson toute entière: les autres danseurs n'auront qu'à répéter après lui un ou deux vers plus ou moins traditionnels, et qui pouvaient s'insérer comme des passe-partout en nombre de chansons. Celles-ci sont donc composées en règle d'une partie qui se renouvelle, confiée au principal danseur, et d'une partie fixe, qui sera reprise comme un refrain par le choeur."

[18] For a development of the idea that dance implies seclusion, see Paul Valéry, "Philosophie de la danse," *Oeuvres*, ed. Jean Hytier, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, No. 127 (Paris: Gallimard, 1959), I, 1390-1403.

[19] See *The Razos de Trobar of Raimon Vidal and Associated Texts*, ed. J.H. Marshall, University of Durham Publications (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p.7: "Per que deves saber que la parladura francesa val mays a es pus avinent a far romanç e retronxas e partorellas, e aucellas de Lemosi valon mays a cansos, a serventes, a verses."

[20] Gaston Paris, "Les Origines de la poésie lyrique en France au moyen âge," *Journal des Savants*, 56 (1891), 674-688, 729-742; 57 (1892), 155-167.

[21] Peter Dronke, *Medieval Latin and the Rise of the European Love-Lyric*, 2 vols, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968); *The Medieval Lyric* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1968).

Gaston Paris, "Les Origines."

Karl Bartsch, *Grundriss zur Geschichte der provenzalischen Literatur*: *Romances et pastourelles françaises des XII^e^ et XIII^e^ siècles*.

[22] Dronke, *Medieval Latin and the Rise of the European Love-Lyric*, 1, 56.

[23] Sandison, *The Chanson d'Aventure in Middle English*.

[24] Erich Köhler, *Ideal und Wirklichkeit in der höfischen Epik: Studien zur Form der frühen Artur-und Graldichtung* (2nd ed., Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1970), p. 142-143.

[25] Köhler, *Ideal und Wirklichkeit*, pp. 163-168.

[26] My objective is not a foolproof system of classification, but a new access to a poetry that has been very much neglected or seen primarily in a crude sociological perspective. To use the words of Hans Robert Jauss, the methodological crux of the problem is to determine "wie die Abhebung und Verschmelzung der Horizonte gegenwärtiger und vergangener ästhetischer Erfahrung methodisch kontrollierbar vollzogen und dabei die Beziehung von Frage und Antwort als hermeneutisches Instrument eingesetzt, aber auch als Folgeverhältnis von Problem und Lösung in literarischen Prozessen erwiesen werden kann" H.R. Jauss, *Ästhetische Erfahrung und literarische Hermeneutik*, vol. I., *Versuche im Feld der ästhetischen Erfahrung* (München: Fink, 1977), p.8.

CHAPTER ONE

The Dance, Its Figure and Ethic

In this chapter, I shall study, first of all, the dance song "A l'entrade del tens clar," considering its form and structure, then the romance of Flamenca, where the résumé dancing song, the "Kalenda maia," is of central importance. I have chosen these poems for a systematic analysis because they come the closest to the French ballad songs. The whole question of ballad origins is a puzzle. Gaston Paris, Joseph Bédier and Peter Dronke have seen in these two songs remnants of ancient popular customs.[1] They have interpreted a number of words and phrases in these songs out of their poetic context and reconstructed on that slight evidence an old tradition to provide a social context. Bédier and Dronke both move too quickly from the text of the poems to a literal interpretation of their tradition. In choosing these two poems for intensive study, I acknowledge a certain folkloric perspective in common with Paris, Bédier and Dronke. I, too, see the poems in relation to later ballad-type poems. A close look at their form and structure is essential, I believe, in order to trace the possible linkages between these and the northern French examples. I differ from them, however, in a number of assumptions, in particular their understanding of folk tradition as mainly artistic and ethical innocence, implying an unselfconsciousness. I would argue that these songs contain evidence that they are, in fact, reflecting on their own supposed innocence. Tradition is one of the more basic concepts of Medieval thought;[2] I attempt to show how the spontaneity of the characters in the two songs under discussion is created through a highly selfconscious and skilfull poetic endeavour.

A danger in the approach made by Paris, Bédier and Dronke is that it tempts the scholar to move directly from the context of the poem to a possible folk tradition. I want to show that these poems stand first and foremost not in a folk, but in a poetic, tradition. For instance, before we infer a mythical conflict between winter and spring from the poetic dramatization of a marital conflict, we should first explore that conflict in the context of the narrative poetry of the time. The romance of _Flamenca_ is, therefore, useful for this study in two ways. Firstly, the conflict in _Flamenca_ is highly analogous to the conflict in "A l'entrade." After all, that is why "Kalenda maia" fits so well into the stream of the narrative. Secondly, the romance incorporates, along with the "Kalenda maia," paraphrases of other lyrical forms, notably the love _chansons_. This gives us firsthand evidence of how, for at least one poet of the time, the love _chanson_ related to the so-called popular forms of lyric poetry.

I: "A l'entrade del tens clar"

"A l'entrade del tens clar" is probably the earlier of the texts to be studied in this chapter. The following text is transcribed from the only copy of the song, as it appears in folio 82 of the Saint-Germain manuscript.[3]

1. A l'endrade del tens clar Eya
Pur joie recomencar Eya
Et pur jalous irritar Eya
Vol la regine mostrar
K'ele est si amorouse.

A la vi A la vie jalous
Lassaz nos Lassaz nos ballar
Entre nos entre nos.

--

2. Ele a fait per tot mandar Eya
Non sie jusq'a la mar Eya
Pucele ni bachelar Eya
Que tuit non venguent dancar
En la dance joiouse.

A la vi, etc. . . .

--

3. Lo Reis i vent d'autre part Eya
Pur la dance destorbar Eya
Que il est en crementar Eya
Que on ne li vuelle emblar
La regine avrillouse.

A la vie, etc. . . .

--

4. Mais pur neient lo vol far Eya
K'ele n'a soig de viellart Eya
Mais d'un legeir bachelar Eya
Ki ben sache solacar
La donne savorouse.

A la vi, etc. . . .

--

5. Qui doncela veist dancar Eya

Et son gent cors deportar   Eya
Ben puist dire de vertat   Eya
K'el mont non sie sa par:
La regine joiouse.

A la vi, etc. . . .

The form of the song is striking at first glance for its combination of narrative, description and exclamation. While the narrative seems to come from the narrator, the pronoun "nos" in the exclamatory refrain incorporates a choral function into the poem's structure. The use of the present tense in the description of events ("voi," "es," "veu, "voill") shows that the time of the events and of the performance of the song are the same: the crowd of people who sing the refrain are thus identical with the young pucelas and bachelars, whom the regina has summoned to a festival. Since the main activity of the queen and of the crowd of young people is said to be dancing, it follows that "A l'entrade" was composed as a dancing song. In order to establish its genre more precisely, I first have to examine the structure and content of the poem.

The refrain summarizes the theme of the poem, and its importance is established by its occurrence after every one of the five stanzas, each of which is structurally uniform with the others in its main outlines. They all have the same rhyme -ar from lines 1-4 and -ouse in the fifth line. In each, the first five lines form a single sentence and are thereby distinguishable syntactically from the rest of the stanza. In spite of this neat division, a structural device makes stanza and refrain appear as a unit. The fact that the exclamations occur in the first three and the last three lines, but are missing at the end of the two middle lines, puts the refrain into an axle-symmetric balance with the beginning of the stanza. In formal terms, both the first three and the last three lines show considerable movement, the end in its violent and exclamatory character, the beginning in the anticipatory thrust of its syntactic structure. Every one of the first three lines introduces a new idea, but the sense of what is being said only becomes clear after the end of the sentence in line 5. The resulting suspense is heightened by the exclamation "eya," which both delays the anticipated explanation of the events and announces an emotional, or fairly dramatic, statement. From the enumeration of scenic details and the description of the characters' motivations, the sentences move towards the image of the dance and its centre, the queen. Here, in the fourth and fifth lines, imagination may rest and gather strength for the commotion which follows. We can thus draw the conclusion that the form of the dancing song is even reflected in the circular movement of its individual stanzas. A similarly circular structure can be observed in the poem as a whole, insofar as its middle, stanza 3, coincides with the climax of its dramatic development, the king's attempted intrusion into the scene, whereas in the first and especially the last stanza, emphasis is put on the figure of the queen, the group of young people being mentioned only in stanzas 2 and 4. At the same time, we can also speak of an incremental development from the narrative introduction towards the euphoric visualisation of the dancing queen. The poem grows out of its descriptive mode, sustained by the present tense of its main verbs, and, leaping into present subjunctive future ("vezes," "pogra"), culminates in an invitation, directed to humanity in general, to experience and recognize the queen's incomparable beauty. In the light of this incremental movement and its euphoric conclusion, our poem is a dancing song in a particular sense: it is an invitation to a dance. As such it may seem to contain a message extending beyond the confines of the scene which it portrays. But the poem ultimately invites us to a particular dance, namely itself. In the end, even its linear aspect leads back into the circle.

In terms of the content, the poem's circular structure is a convenient shell for a concentration of events in one single scene without an indication of any before or after. No geographical location is given, and the statement of time--at the beginning of the bright season--is so general that it refers more to a joyful mood than to the time of the events as such. Our attention is directed outside the scene only by the adverbial phrases "jusqu'a la mar" and "d'autra part."

Whereas "jusqu'a la mar" chiefly characterizes the wide radiance of the festival, "d'autra part," in being the locality from whence the king emerges, establishes a link between the isolation of the locus amoenus and the exterior world which threatens its existence.

Without examining the confrontation between the king and the dancers under the queen's leadership, the nature of the poem's locus amoenus itself cannot be understood. The queen has two aims in convening the festival: she wants to inaugurate a new season of joy at the beginning of spring, and she wants to irritate the jealous husband. She succeeds in both, but undoubtedly the renewal of joy is the stronger reason, because it is tied in with her social position. Her enjoyment is enhanced by the festival, but, even more, her absence would have taken away official protection from all the young people who are there on her authority.

The king acts from personal motive only. His fear that the queen will be "taken away from him"--which implies that he thinks of her as a possession, not as a person with as much authority as she really has--his futile attempt to intrude into the round, and the description of him as a viellart convey the image of an ineffectual and senile old man. The phrase "E per jelos irritar," with which he is first introduced, indicates that the conflict between the king and queen is of long standing.

However, a careful escalation takes place in the poem itself. At the start, the joyfulness of the queen and her retainers is accentuated. The point, in stanza 4, where the queen's straightforward contempt of her husband and her preference for "un leugier bachelar" are expressed, comes only after the king himself, in stanza 3, has shamefully forced the issue into a dramatic climax. In stanza 5, only the refrain reminds us of the conflict; the beautiful queen shines forth in unrivalled radiance.

The forgoing interpretation of "A l'entrade" makes two substantial omissions. The painstaking matters of textual accuracy and musical/metrical structure have so far been left untouched. One would be tempted to leave them alone. For not only does the text exist only in one copy of a very hybrid-looking French-Provençal language mixture, but the verse form also appears unfamiliar.[4] Yet these matters are important. One difference between the usual interpretations and my own lies in the metrical pattern of the poem, which has been disfigured in all previous editions in their placing of "ballar" at the beginning of the last line. The lines thus construed break up the phrase "lassaz nos ballar," while everywhere else in the poem the lines coincide with clearly recognizable phrases or clauses. "Ballar" is obviously a key word in a dancing song, and by its proper position in the poem, it receives the metrical prominence that it would lack at the beginning of a line. Positioned at the beginning, "ballar" is followed at the end of the line by the strongly accentuated "entre nos." The wrong placing of "ballar" distorts the numerical regularity of the metre, and distorts by the same token the reading or vocal performance of the song.

Since "A l'entrade" in its present form appears to follow a logical structure, one should venture one step further and inquire whether the editorial changes bring to light any trace of a metrical structure. It is impossible to be sure what the rhythm in a medieval performance would really have been, but in order to be able to read the poem aloud, let us accept Friedrich Gennrich's transcription of the rhythmic beat as trochaic.[5] This results in anything but a monotonous reading of the text. But there does seem to be a certain inconsistency; discrepancies between mode and word rhythm are permissible in troubadour song,[6] but they occur extraordinarily often in "A l'entrade." The ideas expressed in the poem are arranged with such a high awareness of balance that one wonders at the apparent lack of balance in the metrical arrangement. One is tempted to inquire whether these irregularities may not be part of the song's individual character.

One rather striking deviation leads us into an important discovery. All the fifth lines appear to be iambic rather than trochaic, unless we follow Gennrich's musical interpretation and see the fifth line as an immediate continuation of line 4:

Vól la régíná mostrár / K'el és si ámoróuse.

It is readily apparent that such a reading gives us a septenary line, occurring in the middle of each stanza. There would seem to be no other occurrence of a septenary line in so isolated a position unless this verse pattern was used more extensively in the stanza than would appear at first glance. Let us look at the first three lines, which are characterized by the exclamation "eya." If we drop the "eya" from those lines, we discover that they correspond to the first half of a septenary in each case:

x x x
Á l'entráde dél tens clár
x x x
Púr joíe recómencár
x x x
Ét pur jálous írritár.

A pattern seems to be emerging. Lines 1-3 form the first part of three septenaries, lines 4-5 form a complete septenary. But what about the "eya?" Remembering that the song is a dance, and that the atmosphere is joyful, let us tentatively read the -*y*- in "eya" as a vowel. This reading is, in any case, in accordance with Gennrich's musical transcription. Thus, we discover that the "eya" corresponds in metrical terms to a rudiment of the three feet contained in the second half of a septenary and an annoucement of a full second half as represented by line 5.

The refrain is much more intricate. Having altered the placing of "ballar," I have clearly departed from the line structure proposed by Gennrich and earlier editors. The best I can now do is to propose a tentative reading of the refrain. The results are of necessity of a more hypothetical nature than the interpretation of the first five lines. I have already arrived at a line structure of three lines followed by a septenary, followed by a three-line refrain. Is there a possibility that the refrain is in symmetrical balance to the three opening lines? Scanned in that way, the results are interesting, and have the definite advantage of making the song easy to perform:

```
´  ´  ´  ´ x   ´x ´ ´
A la vie A la vie jelos!
 ´  ´   ´    ´  x  ´   x  ´
Lassaz nos  Lassaz nos ballar
 ´  ´  ´    ´  ´  ´
Entre nos  entre nos.
```

It is striking that each line of the refrain is divided by a caesura, and the first half of the line is repeated at the beginning of the second half. The words in the first half consist in each case of three syllables, and due to the strongly exclamatory nature of the refrain each syllable would carry a vigorous stress.

Looking at the whole stanza, this is the symmetrical pattern:

```
´  ´  ´
A la vi
 ´  ´   ´
Lassaz nos
 ´  ´  ´
Entre nos
```

```
´   x  ´  x  ´   x    ´
A l'entrade del tens clar,
 ´   x ´  x ´ x  ´
Pur joie recomencar,
 ´  x   ´ x  ´  x ´
Et pur jelos irritar,
 ´   x  ´ x ´   x  ´
Vol la regine mostrar
x  ´  ´  x ´ x ´  x
K'el es si amorouse.
´  x  ´ x ´ ´
A la vie jelos!
 ´  x   ´   x  ´
Lassaz nos ballar
 ´  ´  ´
Entre nos!
```

```
´´´
Eya
´´´
Eya
´´´
Eya
```

The initial three lines of the stanza stand in balance to the three lines of the refrain around the two regular middle lines. These middle lines, two halves of a septenary, stand in axle-symmetric balance to each other through the reversal of a trochaic into an iambic measure. A further symmetry exists between the three initial lines and the three lines of the refrain. In all six of the lines there is an interlinear division between the main syntactic body and the three-beat exclamations. In lines 1-3 the more exclamatory part occurs after the core of the stanza. In lines 6-8, on the other hand, this ordering is reversed. If one considers only the logical content of the stanza, it is complete as presented in the central box.

The middle part of the stanza, lines 4 and 5, shows a certain lack of uniformity in that the three last half lines leave the steady pace of the stanza beginning and appear progressively truncated. The ictus in that part is much less easy to ascertain than in the rest of the poem. The only half line that still has potentially four beats is:

´ x ´x ´ ´
A la vie jelos.

There, "jelos," again a key word, must be given enough prominence so that both syllables carry an equal stress. With this stress, a pattern is formed in which the three refrain lines become more and more exclamatory. The decreasing of syllables from six to five to three transforms the song into a succession of shouts. Syllabic speed is transformed into vocal intensity. The stanza comes thus to a natural standstill, while creating the tension and energy necessary for the beginning of the next stanza.

I have not touched the question of those words which do not coincide rhythmically with a trochaic mode. There are twenty-seven instances altogether--a considerable number for so short a poem. They are: "del," "tens," "joie," "jalous," "regine," "est," and "si" in stanza 1, "non," "sie," "jusq'à," "pucele," "tuit," "non" and "venguent" in stanza 2, "lo," "Reis," "i," "vent," and "regine" in stanza 3, only "neient" in stanza 4, "donc," "la," "k'el," "mont," "non," "sie" and "regine" in stanza 5. To be sure, we do not have to confront this problem, since, as we have seen, such deviations are permissible in troubadour song. Yet, there are a large number of them, and a tentative explanation to the reader, or directives to the singer, might be in order.

In many cases, one can compensate for the irregular placement of accents on the grounds that the words so affected become more prominent in the text. The most important word in this category is "regine," which clashes with the mode each time it occurs. Prominence of this word is reasonable, since it denotes the central figure of the song. "Joie" and "jalous" are key words thematically, and would justly receive prominence. "Si" after "est" in stanza 1 receives an appropriate emotional underlining through its irregular beat, and so do "neient" in stanza 4 and "non" and "sie" in stanza 5. The discrepancy of "Non sie jusq'a," "pucele" and "tuit non venguent" in stanza 2, and of "el mont non sie" in the last stanza can be perhaps explained by reason of the intensely hyperbolical statements which they make. "Lo Reis i vent," in the middle stanza, is more difficult to understand. Perhaps the rhythmic discord corresponds to the element of discord which is introduced thematically. That leaves "del" and "tens" in stanza 1 and "donc" and "la" in stanza 5 to be explained. The discordance is effective to some extent in the instance of the final stanza, at least, in that it serves to slow down the rhythm of the song as it comes to a close.

In conclusion, the metre of the poem tells us something of its poetic meaning. By choosing the trochaic septenary, the poet proves to be a lover of tradition but also, through bold adaptation of the metre to the overall "round" shape of the poem, he shows that he considers this tradition to be his property, something which he can mold to his purposes, a versatile tool for sophisticated expression. But, on the other hand, we recognize in this poem a variety of poetic taste which is diametrically opposed to the concept of courtly poetry as a strictly and explicitly followed system of formal and topical convention. Rather than slavishly preserve old myths, the poet fashions the king, the queen and the dancers out of his own imagination, and out of the potential of the poetic language. Of course, we know the jealous husband, the assertive wife, the young courtly lover as ubiquitous medieval stereotypes. What is remarkable in "A l'entrade" is the meeting of stereotypes and common sense in the world of a fictitious ritual. "A l'entrade" presents the triangle conflict with its social consequences. But in such a short poem, the integration of the social with the poetic raises more questions than it answers. What does one suppose might happen next? What if the husband comes back with his retainers? What if he locks up the queen in his palace or in a monastery? A triangle situation is not easily predictable and offers a wide range of possible dramatic developments. It can as easily lead into tragedy as into ridicule and farce. While a song as short as "A l'entrade" cannot be expected to account for all these possibilities, its distance from both tragedy and farce is too striking to be accidental. The poem creates a playfully serene idyll through the meticulous integration of form and theme. What sort of literary taste made this kind of song possible, kept its poet alive?

A partial answer to this question can be found in the more explicit treatments of the social triangle, among which _Flamenca_ is the narrative closest in its mood and dénouement to "A l'entrade."

II: _Flamenca_

I have chosen _Flamenca_ as the object of my study for several reasons. Firstly, the love concept expressed in the romance is very close to that of the majority of the troubadour lyrics. As Kurt Lewent, who has written the most thorough commentary on _Flamenca_, has indicated:

> Der Flamencaroman setzt die momentane lyrische Stimmung des Trobadorliedes in den Ablauf eines Geschehens um.[8]

Secondly, to trace an outline of troubadour love as manifested in a romance rather than in its primary lyrical form is convenient here for two reasons. The concept of troubadour love is many-sided and very difficult, and in order to study it completely one would have to examine all or nearly all available lyrics. Even a scholar like Moshé Lazar, whose main object is to explain _fin amors_, has to restrict this scope to a "classical" poet.[9] But, since my study leads in another direction, I prefer a broader view of troubadour love than one available from any single poet. Furthermore, even should it be possible to find a poet who provided a complete picture of courtly love, one would be faced with resolving the difference between the portrayals of the ethic in the *cansos*, such as those of Bernard de Ventadour or Arnaut Daniel, and in the dancing songs, such as "A l'entrade." In *Flamenca*, we find the two portrayals--*fin amors* and consummated adultery--complementing each other without apparent difficulty. A final reason for choosing *Flamenca* is that it develops the consequences of the adulterous triangle into a more plausible and complete picture than any other medieval work about adulterous love. This makes it indispensable in the study of the *mal-mariée* and, therefore, of the dancing songs which dramatize the same subject. In this, I concur with the approach of Kurt Lewent, and reject the theory that *Flamenca* is a satire, its characters to be seen as typed.[10] The author of the romance, as Lewent has remarked, has accomplished a considerable artistic feat in his handling of the love triangle of husband, wife and lover, which is very difficult to work skilfully into a poem. Despite this difficulty, he does not make use of such poetic expendients as the love potion of *Tristan*, or the bird metamorphosis of the *Yonec* of Marie de France.[11] Every confrontation between the characters, and the solutions of all the problems, arise out of the characters themselves and out of the basic triangle relationship.[12] Thus, our romance provides a partial answer to the question of how we can imagine the modalities and consequences of the adulterous relation which is presented in a more summary form in the chansons de la mal-mariée.

The basic plot is very simple: Flamenca, a young and attractive woman, is imprisoned by her jealous husband Archimbaut in a tower. Guillaume, whom Amor has summoned to Flamenca's rescue, establishes contact with Flamenca through a number of elaborate stratagems and wins her love. After the physical consummation of their love, Flamenca becomes so recalcitrant that her husband is forced to talk to her about their marriage. She offers to swear an oath:

> qu'en aissi tostems mi gardes
> co vos m'aves saîns garada
>
> (6688-89)

if he lets her out of the tower. Archimbaut, who suddenly has complete confidence in his wife, unwittingly aids the lovers.

Flamenca gives us a just and well reasoned description of the mal-mariée situation, for, as Kurt Lewent points out, it does not give preferential treatment to any of its characters.[13] I will examine the plot in more detail so as to determine the ethical motivation and dramatic function of the husband, his adulterous wife and her lover. Here, the sufferings of the jealous husband are portrayed in a detail which is unusual in its richness. His case will therefore be discussed first.

Archimbaut, before and after his attack of jealousy, is a very polite, well-bred and honoured member of society.[14]

As lord of Bourbon he is a respected neighbour of Flamenca's father, the count of Nemours. Because Archimbaut lives near enough to Flamenca's father to provide help in an emergency and because her parents do not want to send their daughter too far away, he is preferred as a suitor to a king who in his eastern realm has heard of Flamenca's beauty. After he has given up his jealous and cruel treatment of Flamenca by releasing her from the tower and by allowing her to resume her functions as a lady, he again becomes a model nobleman. He spends a huge amount of his wealth on the welcoming celebrations for his bride, Flamenca, and on the tournament that marks the resumption of his social life. In a tournament in Louvain his performance is second only to that of Guillaume, Flamenca's lover. If we consider that Archimbaut is really a perfect gentleman, it becomes obvious that the events which lead him into a net of suspicion and jealousy could befall anybody or at least any member of his society. He seems to be particularly suited to become a victim only insofar as he shows a lack of self-control when he arrives three days early for his wedding and when he wishes he could find a venal clergyman to marry him before the set day.[15] But his impatience is as much motivated by Flamenca's beauty as it may be a trait of his character.

His jealousy is set off by some unfortunate circumstances, ultimately the result of the evil activities of two allegorical figures, Avolesa and Cobezesa, Baseness and Vileness, respectively. The crucial scene, reminiscent of the Devil's bartering with God in the Book of Job and of the deliberations of the gods in Homer about the fate of men, takes place during the welcoming celebrations in honour of Flamenca at Archimbaut's court. The king of France, whom Archimbaut has asked to escort Flamenca on the journey from her parents' palace to his own, and the queen are guests of honour. Before the planned tournament is to begin, the king asks the queen and Flamenca to begin a dance in which all present will take part. The description of the dance, ranging from the orchestra to the facial expressions of the dancers, gradually builds up an atmosphere of extreme elation. The feeling of happiness (joi) experienced by the dancers increases to the point of transcendence:

> Amors lur a tal joi donat
> ques a cascun fon ben a vis
> que totz vius fos em Paradis.
> (738-40)

As a consequence, the action completely leaves the human sphere and continues in the realm of allegory:

> Jois e Jovens a(n.)ls balz levatz
> ab lur cosina na Proesa.
> (748-49)

Here, the two unsavoury figures of Avolesa and Cobezesa join in the action. Avolesa, who very impressed by so much happiness, wants to hide under the earth that day, but her courage is restored by Cobezesa (752ff.) For her good services Cobezesa is granted by Avolesa an autonomous sphere of influence:

> Avoleza fes un sanglut
> e diz: "Vos sias benvenguda,
> Vos m'aves la vida renduda,
> domna Cobezesa, per Dieu!
> Eu voil sian franc tut vostre fieu;
> Ueimais sias dona per vos,
> et aiaz comtes e baros
> e reis e dux, clers e marques,
> cavalliers, vilans e borzes,
> mais de las domnas non cove
> qu'ieu las vos do, qu'ieu no i ai re,
> et eu no.us voil tal causa dar
> que non puescas en dreg portar.
> Pero, si neguna volia
> esser de vostra compania,
> ja nous pesses a mi enuig."
> (762-77)

Here the flight into allegory ends abruptly and the tale resumes with the preparation of the knights for the tournament that was to follow, and during which the queen, imagining an affair between Flamenca and the king, plants the first seeds of jealousy in Archimbaut's mind

To judge from Avolesa's statement that women can choose for themselves whether or not to adhere to her and Cobezesa, the queen will have to be blamed for all that follows. Seeing her husband carry on his lance a sleeve that she does not recognize as coming from any of her dresses, the queen immediately suspects that it was given to him by Flamenca. She feels hurt, because the sleeve is an obvious sign that the two are in love. Her suspicion, since it is not based on any evidence, shows us that the queen has been thinking about Flamenca.

In psychological and allegorical terms she is "covetous" of Flamenca's beauty, which the narrator has earlier described as the envy of all the other women. As revenge, she causes Archimbaut's jealousy by warning him of the affair she thinks Flamenca and the king are having. Archimbaut answers her suspicions at first by telling her that the king is not doing anything dishonourable--"Qu'al res non es mais plas deportz." But the queen tells him right then that he will think differently before two weeks are over. Archimbaut very soon begins to see things between his wife and the king, which he might not have noticed without the queen's warning and which he might not even notice now without the continual sight of the queen's angry face. The king, it is true, seems to be quite familiar with Flamenca, when, for example, he leads her to dinner, his hand resting on her bosom. But he does not mean to offend his host. When he kisses Flamenca in Archimbaut's presence, it is only to do him honour. As the narrator explains, the king is not in love with the young bride.

After all the guests have departed, Archimbaut falls into a sombre mood that gradually becomes a nervous breakdown. A detailed analysis of his illness has been made by Ilse Nolting-Hauff.[16] I would only suggest a Biblical parallel to Archimbaut's sufferings that was not mentioned by any previous commentator. As I have already mentioned, the allegorical scene where Cobezesa is granted power over men, evokes the scene in the Book of *Job* where God allows Satan to bring tribulations on Job and his family. This parallel is further developed in the way in which Archimbaut's friends take notice of his jealousy. Like Job's friends, they try to chastize him without understanding the nature of his plight. If we consider Archimbaut's essentially noble character, he is obviously right when he replies to one of his friends:

> Ben pauc ne sai gelos non fosson.
> Tal m'en escarnisson e.n tosson
> que foron plus gilos de me
> si tot jorn visson davan se
> tam bella ren con ieu i vei.
>
> (1185-89)

The parellel with *Job* is noteworthy insofar as it shows that Archimbaut is not to be seen as a fundamentally burlesque or inhuman character. His evil treatment of Flamenca comes as a consequnce of an insanity that could befall even the best. Here, and also later, when he is blind to the adultery that his wife commits almost under his eyes, he does the best of which any other man would be capable under an equal set of social requirements and constraints. It is not the intent of the author to chastize the husband for his jealousy, but rather to illustrate the basic dilemma of the marriage state. In psychological terms, the same impulsive manner that leads Archimbaut into a nervous breakdown could have made him an ideal husband.

Even more than in the portrayal of Archimbaut, marriage comes under scrutiny in the rôle played by Flamenca. Her sad confinement results from an intrigue in which nobody, except for the queen, plays a basically malevolent part. The queen herself acts in a completely unpremeditated way. Thus, the dramatic chain-reaction which all of a sudden upsets Archimbaut's and Flamenca's domestic peace is initially triggered by an accident. Once this initial conflict has occurred, the very qualities that could have made Flamenca into a pleasant and efficient wife play a decisive part in her immobilisation. Her beauty, already a cause of the queen's jealousy, subsequently becomes a main cause for Archimbaut's fears. Her good manners leave her no other recourse in the face of a cruel husband than complete inaction. Only her interest in Guillaume makes her act in a positive way, and only after meeting him in secret does she stand up to Archimbaut's oppression, compelling him to discuss the situation. Because she is a perfect lady, love but not hate makes her take the initiative. Even in her final confrontation with her husband, she does not blame him, but rather those who joined them in wedlock:

> "Bel(s) segner cars, qui ajostet
> mi e vos gran peccat y fes."
>
> (6676-77)

Although she does not name the person responsible for her unhappy marriage, the reader will remember the scene when her father hands her over to Archimbaut as his bride:

> Le coms di(s): "Vesi vostr'esposa,
> l'Archimbaut, si.us plas, prendes la."
> (272-73)

Flamenca, conscious of her father's high-handed manner, answers with a smile:

> e dis: "Sener, ben faitz parer
> que.m tengas en vostre poder,
> qu'aissi.m donas leugeramen;
> mais, pos vos plas, ieu i consen."
> (277-80)

What underlines her father's thoughtlessness even more is that the otherwise so impulsive Archimbaut takes into consideration Flamenca's right to have a say in the matter. Flamenca's good nature becomes obvious in her lack of resistance to her father's wish and through the absence of any personal accusation in the further course of events. If we take her point of view, it will be hard to find the villain of the piece, since she herself assumes some responsibility for her fate through her free consent to marriage. She thus shows not only a good nature, but also strength of character.

Through awareness of her own situation she is depicted moreover as a person with great power of judgement. As such she is also recognized by her father's retainers, who think her capable of understanding the political implications of her marriage. All these qualities become useful throughout the book. When the queen tells her at the tournament that she would like to have a conversation with Archimbaut, she goes away to have a pleasant chat with the countess of Nevers and makes herself comfortable to watch the cavaliers. The same ability to keep calm emerges in the tactful handling of her affair with Guillaume, her patience as a lover and, especially, her decision to send Guillaume away, after her newly recovered freedom brings with it too many public duties for her to continue the secret meetings for the time being.

Guillaume de Nevers, the young knight who is dispatched by Amor to rescue Flamenca, shares with the heroine a great talent for discretion. But, while her intellectual qualities seem to be innate, his wisdom has been acquired through much study. Strong and handsome like Absolom and wise as Solomon, he has learned the seven arts in Paris so thoroughly that he could teach others if he wanted to and, moreover, he could read and sing in church better than any other clerk.[17] He is Archimbaut's equal, since he is related to the highest aristocracy, but unlike his rival who has acquired much practical experience in the art of love,[18] he is still virgin and knows love only from the classical authors whom he has studied because he knows that it is useful for a young man to be prepared for the passion that will inevitably attack him some day. His learning helps him in all stages of his exploit. His landlords like him well enough to move out of their own house that he may have quiet to recover from a mysterious ailment. Thus secluded, he has a tunnel dug to the public baths, the only place where Flamenca goes alone with her servants, her husband guarding the door from without. His learning and amicable nature help him become an altar boy, and he exchanges a word or two with Flamenca at church services. Most useful is his training in the seven liberal arts, for it is his cautious diplomacy which helps him win Flamenca under such adverse conditions.[19]

As a learned man, his perspective is closer to that of the narrator and the author than that of any other character,[20] a fact which is reflected in the cautious wisdom they share. Characteristic of this, is Guillaume's complete uncertainty of his success in winning Flamenca's love, while he masters the merely technical aspect of his plan with confidence.[21]

On another level, the author of Flamenca is cautious and humble in his role as poetic creator. While his theme is purely conventional, and his characters are well known as stock figures, he brings them to life with originality and refinement. Like Guillaume, he concentrates his efforts on the perfection of his execution, and an element of suspense is always present concerning the outcome of the events. For, unlike other handlings of the same theme, our author allows the natural confrontation of character, and not the external impositon of his will, to kindle the action. The result, as I shall explain, is to create a dynamic portrayal of the world as it has come to be.

The manner of his composition, as has been observed by Kurt Lewent, is to prepare the reader carefully for future events in the story,[22] creating the impression of a strictly logical course of action. A quite original device to gain that effect is his practice of mentioning the exact time lapses between all major events. The passions of the characters are thus not only logically motivated, but they are permitted reasonable time to grow. The author, having called his work novas, a word in which both the meanings of "novella" and of "news" are reflected,[23] attempts to "cling to the facts." This he does in part through the depiction of contemporary social conventions as they come to light in all characters and the clash of these conventions with what we might call permanent axioms of life.[24] This ironic contradiction becomes particularly acute in the so-called second part of Flamenca[25] when the heroine and Guillaume carry on with their affair in the friendly presence of Archimbaut, who does not seem to understand what is going on. Both the lovers and the husband behave during all this time as exemplary members of society, which makes adultery seem to be a socially accepted mode of behaviour. Although this is nothing new in terms of the courtly love ethic, the full social context of Flamenca reflects a tension between aristocratic convention and the facts of life. Archimbaut's previous reaction indicates that he would be deeply hurt if he knew what was going on. His fear of being cuckolded has already driven him to highly unsocial behaviour, and must have its foundation in society's reaction at the time to such a state of affairs. On the other hand, as the narrator tells us, no man can prevent his wife from committing adultery, not even if he were as wise as Boethius. Comparing Guillaume and Archimbaut in the light of this statement, Guillaume's advantage consists ultimately in his role as a lover as compared to that of a husband. The same logical inconsistency that Gaston Paris observed in the chansons de la mal-mariée is contained in the plot of Flamenca: if husbands are so cruel and wives so conscious of their oppression, why do people still become married?[26] Since the author is manifestly concerned with the consistency of his plot, it is quite inconceivable that he would have left this riddle unsolved, had he been aware of any obvious answer. It has been recently suggested that this inconsistency permits one to view Flamenca as a satire on courtly love.[27] Intriguing though this proposal may be, it seems to me to be more probable that the author's puzzlement is derived from a lack of knowledge which he shares with all his contemporaries, and which is brought about by the decadence of the world. The reason for this decline of knowledge is given in the topos laudatio temporis acti towards the beginning of the poem. The passage follows a superlative description of the court held by Flamenca's father, when he gives her in marriage to Archimbaut:

> Genz non son cortz aitals con solo;
> breumen s'en passa hom aora,
> per que vai Pres a mala ora.
> Non es meravilla neguna,
> car totz le monz trai a la una.
> Sabez cals una es aquil?
> Malvestatz c'a mes en ecil
> Valor e so qu'a leis s'atain;
> Pres es mortz e Jois sos compain,
> -E Deus! per que?--Deu! car Vergona
> mor cascun jorn.--E non la poina
> donhas de garir Conoissensa?
> -Per Dieu! non ges, car Benvolenza
> non es oi res mais fins baratz,
> car, si conseil neis demandatz,
> non trobares qui ja.l vos don
> si non i conois lo sieu pron,
> o.l pron ques es de son amic
> o.l dan qu'es de son enemic;
> per so.n fail qui joven capte.
> No m'o cal dir, cascus o ve
> c'Amors dechai e te.l cap morn;
> pero a mas novas vos torn.
>
> (228-50)

Courtly qualities like "pres," "valor" and "joi," the social category of "joven," central in the system of courtly love, finally "Amors," the personification of that love, are enumerated here in a tone of complete approval. What the narrator deplores is the decadence of love, not its inherent contradiction with reality.[28] This decadence is not described as a sudden change in quality comparable to Lucifer's fall from heaven or Adam and Eve's eviction from the Garden of Eden; it is explained only in its mechanism. To regain "conoissensa" is theoretically not impossible, since only "benvolenza," (good will), is needed. The return to a better age is not prevented by an angel with a flaming sword, but by an insufficiency of that good will, that is, by a merely quantitative lack. This lack of good will is not explained, but simply taken as a fact, and as such, the mention of it in a crucial place in the romance is more evidence of the author's preoccupation with the quantitative magnitude of human problems.

Thus, for the author, the ideal of courtly love is unattainable in practice, but not in theory. To borrow a term from Andreas Capellanus, whose theory of courtly love was written about sixty years before _Flamenca_, we may qualify this ideal love as "honest."[29] Returning to _Flamenca_, however, even the lost state of courtly love is not to be seen as perfect, for the author, in citing _vergogna_ and _conoissensa_ as vital accessories of the love ethic, reminds us that the good times evoked are not to be confused with paradise. They were better than now only by degree. From his viewpoint at the corrupt end of history, the author develops his ethic out of an empirical weighing of traditional axioms against each other, and it is only natural that some of them are incompatible.

III: "Kalenda maia"

In the course of _Flamenca_, in a scene just before the love intrigue is to begin, a song is sung by a group of village girls who happen to be passing Guillaume. He has been exploring the possibility of contacting Flamenca in church as an altar boy, and the song which he overhears has a strange bearing on the love intrigue itself, and on the philosophic framework of the romance. The song is "Kalenda maia," the resumé *mal-mariée* which I have mentioned earlier:

> que dis: "Cella domna ben aia
> que non fai languir son amic,
> ni non tem gilos ni castic
> qu'il non an a son cavallier
> em bosc, em prat o en vergier,
> e dins sa cambra non l'amene
> per so que meilz ab lui s'abene,
> e.l gilos jassa daus l'esponda;
> e, si parla, qu'il li responda:
> No.m sones mot, taitz vos en lai,
> qu'entre mos bras mos amic(s) jai.
> Kalenda maia. E vai s'en.
>
> (3236-47)

Compared with Guillaume's and Flamenca's thoughtful diplomacy, the girls propose in their song an unrealistically violent solution to the *mal-mariée* conflict. In style and in arguement, this scene contrasts sharply with the diligently motivated plot of the romance. This difference is underlined by the singers themselves, who personify the voice of community tradition, and as such, Flamenca's adultery is given a broader basis, beyond the interests of fashion, the nobility and psychological motivation. Furthermore, in its position in the romance, the song functions as a *devinola*, a riddle or prophecy, and thus acts as a catalyst for the plot and provides an element of suspense. Finally, in anticipating an answer to the question as to whether adultery can be justified or not, the "Kalenda maia" sets the background for a Flamenca which is mainly preoccupied with the problems of love as such.[30]

In other words, it is the interrelationship between the romance and the "Kalenda maia" which is of extreme importance, for it is a dynamic relationship which broadens and extends the meaning of both. In its violent simplification of matters, the "Kalenda maia" poem is similar to the Old French mal-mariée songs, but in juxtaposition with Flamenca's diplomatic course of action, Flamenca's role as leader is brought out, and her act of adultery becomes ennobled by tradition. The crudeness of the mal-mariée songs led Gaston Paris to the conclusion that they originated in ritual and convention.[31] For him, their meaning does not transcend the playful atmosphere of a festival.[32] As it appears in Flamenca, however, the "Kalenda maia," while traditional in origin and playful in mood, has a meaning which is capable of assuming programmatic overtones. On the one hand, the song prevents the act of adultery from assuming the appearance of a fabliau, for it presents it instead as an act of defiance. By depicting the circumstances of the romance as ideal, the song plays a major role in distancing the romance from either fabliau or tragedy. On the other hand, the possible social context of the song is brought out through the progress of the romance.

Compared with other _chansons de la mal-mariée_, the "Kalenda maia" is not of the best. Because of its adaption to the context of a romance, it appears in roughly the usual wording, but not in the appropriate metrical form. Even the statement it makes is adapted to the romance. In contrast, "A l'entrade" is strikingly less violent, and its confrontation between husband and wife is less abrupt and better motivated. The object of the queen's favour is not a particular lover, but an undetermined young man "qui ben sapche solacar," which basically means that he has to be a good sport. The poem concentrates more on joy than on conflict. Especially noteworthy is that in the "Kalenda maia" the words used to attack the _jaloux_ are put into the mouth of the wife, whereas in "A l'entrade" the invective against the king is reported by the narrator and reinforced by the exclamations of the dancers. The violence of the "Kalenda maia" functions within the romance much in the way that the exclamatory refrain of "A l'entrade" functions within the poem, and both Flamenca and the _regina_ show a quiet determination which is similar in its quality. In fact, the apparent playfulness of "A l'entrade" parallels the ethical balance of the romance, which is created through the interrelationship of the narrative and the poem. Moreover, in both the romance and "A l'entrade," the stories are prolonged beyond the moment of conflict with the husband to a stage where the protagonists no longer find any obstacles to their pleasure. Both plots are more strongly motivated in love than in hate.

To come to the final point, in both _Flamenca_ and "A l'entrade" the "husband question" is dealt with in a very circumspect manner. We have seen how, in _Flamenca_, in spite of its diligent and almost sympathetic characterization of the husband, the paradox of courtly adultery is demonstrated. In "A l'entrade," where all action is forced into so much less space, this paradox comes to light in the circular arrangement of its events. The middle stanza, as we have seen, is occupied by the intruding jealous husband, so that, in spite of a minimal emphasis on conflict, the whole text centers around the ludicrous figure of the king. The _jaloux_ stands visibly in the centre of _joi_: without this pre-determined role, the plot of _Flamenca_ would be inconceivable, and the _locus amoenus_ in "A l'entrade" would lack the clearly defined boundary which separates it from the gray continuity of life. Without the _jaloux_, there would be harmony without dynamism, no exclamatory refrain, no dramatic climax and, therefore, a euphoria without the knowledge of conflict. Total harmony, as Eustace Bright in Nathaniel Hawthorne's _Wonder Book_ explains, can soon become a little boring.[33]

The particular seclusion of the _locus amoenus_ becomes problematic in the light of these facts, as does the self-contained design of the poem. On the one hand, all the statements as well as the complete structure of "A l'entrade" fit into the poem's own frame of reference; an application of its meaning to an exterior "real world" is not necessary. Or, as Gaston Paris put it, "tout cela n'est qu'un jeu, un amusement de jour de fête."[34] On the other hand, the ludicrous figure of the jealous husband contains so many unsolved questions that one is almost compelled to place him in a larger context, something that was done in Flamenca. Inasmuch as the circular form of "A l'entrade" precludes our asking for external motivation, the poem becomes an ideal vehicle for social invective of a kind that is difficult to confront, because it might just not be invective at all.

Our Old French poems, as I will show, are considerably less subtle: invective is totally excluded or else is so harsh that it must find its motivation in the sad, but trivial, facts of daily life.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter One

[1] Peter Dronke, *The Medieval Lyric*, 2nd. ed. (London: Hutchinson, 1978), pp.196-197.

Gaston Paris, "Les Origines de la poésie lyrique en France," *Journal des Savants*, 57 (1892), 416-418.

Joseph Bédier, "Les fêtes de mai et les commencements de la poésie lyrique au moyen âge," *Revue des deux Mondes*, 135 (1896), 158-159; "Les plus anciennes danses françaises," *Revue des deux Mondes*, 31 (1906), 406-408, 424.

[2] Note, for instance, Paul Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale*, Collection poetique (Paris: Seuil, c. 1972).

[3] *Le Chansonnier français de Saint-Germain-des-Prés*, ed. P. Meyer and G. Raymond, Vol. 1, Société des anciens textes francais (Paris: Librairie de Firmin Didot et C^{ie}, 1892), rpt. 1968, folio 82, verso. For a list of editions previous to 1959, see the bibliography to Friedrich Gennrich, *Lo Gai Saber: 50 ausgewählte Troubadourlieder*, Musikwissenschaftliche Studienbibliothek, 18-19 (Darmstadt, 1959), p.85.

[4] The musical editor who has most recently thrown up his hands over this text is Hendrik Van der Werf, *The Chansons of the Troubadours and Trouvères: A Study of the Melodies and their Relations to the Poems* (Utrecht: Oosthoeck, 1972), pp.98-99.

[5] Gennrich, *Lo Gai Saber*, pp.62-63.

[6] Gustave Reese, *Music in the Middle Ages: With an Introduction on the Music of Ancient Times* (New York: Norton, 1940), p.209.

[7] All citations are from the edition by Ulrich Gschwind, *Le Roman de Flamenca*, Romanica Helvetica, 86 A, B, 2 vols. (Berne: Francke, 1976); the text itself is found in Vol. 1.

[8] Kurt Lewent, "Zum Inhalt und Aufbau der 'Flamenca'," *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, 53 (1933), 12. Compare Georges Millardet, *De Roman de Flamenca* (Paris:

Boivin, 1936), p.19 who sees in Flamenca "la mise en action, sous fortune de roman, des théories les plus raffinées de l'amour courtois."

[9] Moshé Lazar, *Amour courtois et "fin'amors" dans la littérature du XII^{e} siècle*, Bibliothèque française et romane, Ser. C: Etudes littéraires, 8 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1964). The "classical" poet in this case is Bernard de Ventadour.

[10] The satirical point of view is laid out by Gordon Shedd, "*Flamenca*: A Medieval Satire on Courtly Love," *The Chaucer Review*, 2 (1967-68), 43-65.

[11] Lewent, p.13. An exhaustive discussion of parallels between *Flamenca* and similar Provençal and French literature is given in Ilse Nolting-Hauff, *Die Stellung der Liebeskasuistik im höfischen Roman* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1959), pp.104-106.

[12] Nolting-Hauff, o. 108, speaks of a "Verzicht auf alle von aussen kommender Konflikte und Spannungsmomente."

[13] Lewent, p.78.

[14] The retainers of Flamenca's father describe him in these terms:

> Meller cavalliers nom pot cener
> Espaza tan quan dural monz. (30-31)

[15] For a discussion of other symptoms of his impatience, see Nolting-Hauff, pp.102-103.

[16] Nolting-Hauff, pp.104-124.

[17] *Ibid.*, p.126.

[18] *Flamenca*, Lines 325-330:

> Car la nueg jac ab la puncela
> E si la fes domna noella,
> Car d'aquo era ben maistre;
> Nulla dona de si mal istre
> Non fo que, si el la pregues,
> Endesen no l'endomengues.

[19] Nolting-Hauff, pp. 141-167.

[20] Ibid., p.124.

[21] Ibid., p.140.

[22] Lewent, p.81.

[23] Erich Müller, Die altprovenzalische Versnovelle, Romanistische Arbeiten, 15 (Halle: Niemeyer, 1930), p.10: "Fassen wir zusammen, so ergibt sich: die Dichter selbst bezeichneten als novas nur Gedichte erzählenden Inhalts, also Novellen und Romane. Dabei ist wohl zu beachten, dass diese Bezeichnung nur den Inhalt eines Gedichtes betrifft. Novas heisst eben "die Neuigkeit, die neue Geschichte."

[24] Lewent, p.75, sees as the central concept of Flamenca "die vom Schicksal geübte, in den Dingen liegende bittere Ironie, die den betrogenen Ehemann zwar als scheinbar unübertrefflichen Wächter seiner Frau und später äusserlich im Glanz seines Rittertums, als liebenswürdigen Gastgeber zeigt, in Wahrheit aber dazu bestimmt, als Helfershelfter für seine eigene Schmach zu fungieren."

[25] Lewent, p.73 ff and Nolting-Hauff, p.97, give good reasons, in opposition to earlier opinions, for seeing the "first" and "second" parts of Flamenca as a well-structured whole.

[26] Paris, "Origines," p.428.

[27] Shedd, pp.43-65.

[28] Compare this passage of Flamenca to Shedd's remarks (p. 65): "The Flamenca-poet sees the folly immanent in man's attempt to deify human emotions, human relationships, and he sees the essential truth residing in the familiar romance depiction of Amor as a capricious, tyrannical god. And so, mining from within the established conventions of courtly love, he cuts through the veneer of ritual-encrusted rhetoric and behaviour to show us the unprepossessing reality that may lurk underneath." This seems to me true in part. What distinguishes Flamenca's mode from satire is that the author acknowledges the effects of decadence for all of contemporary society, himself not excluded.

Further on the question of satire, see P.A. Olson, "Le Roman de Flamenca: History and Literary Convention," Speculum, 55 (1958), 7-23; L.T. Topsfield, "Intention and Ideas in Flamenca,: Medium Aevum, 36 (1967), 119-33; and Hermann J. Weigand, "Flamenca: A Post-Arthurian Romance of Courtly Love," Euphorion, 58 (1964), 129-152.

[29] Paul Schlösser, Andreas Capellanus: Seine Minnelehre und das christliche Weltbild um 1200. Abhandlungen zur Kunst-, Musik- und Literaturwissenschaft, 15 (Bonn:

Bouvier, 1960), pp. 134-135.

[30] Here Flamenca may be distinguished from the Tristan story, where ethical scruples and the hostile impact of society play crucial roles.

[31] Paris, "Origines," pp.423-427.

[32] Ibid., pp.427-429.

[33] "And, to tell you the truth, I cannot help being glad--(though, to be sure, it was an uncommonly naughty thing for her to do)--but I cannot help being glad that our foolish Pandora peeped into the box. No doubt--no doubt--the troubles are still flying about the world, and have increased in multitude, rather than lessened, and are a very ugly set of imps, and carry most venimous stings in their tails. I have felt them already, and expect to feel them more, as I grow older. But then that lovely and lightsome little figure of Hope! What in the world could we do without her?" from "The Paradise of Children," in Nathaniel Hawthorne, A Wonder Book and Tanglewood Tales. (The centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, vol. 7 (Ohio State University Press, 1972), p.81.

[34] Paris, "Les Origines," p.428.

CHAPTER TWO

Simplicity and the Atavistic Outlook

The poems discussed in this chapter do not belong to a generically identified group. One term suggested for the group is _poésie lyrique populaire_, which for Gaston Paris, the scholar who probably used it the most and with the most enthusiasm, meant two things. _Populaire_ distinguished this group from poems specifically in the courtly tradition, but it also summarized the view that these songs were created in the age-old unwritten, uncontaminated, natural tradition of the "people." While the latter notion has earned Gaston Paris an unenviable notoriety, the first meaning of _populaire_ is not so easy to get away from.

If our concept of the courtly _chanson_ requires a pining lover who simply cannot expect to enjoy at ease the physical presence of the adored lady, most _chansons d'histoire_, _caroles_ and _chansons de la mal-mariée_ are not courtly. For "A l'entrade," _Flamenca_, and "Kalenda Maia," it took a lot of explaining to show how the Old French "popular" lyrics fit into the periphery of the established love doctrine. A similar problem is confronted in this chapter. It will be determined in what way and to what degree the Old French lyrics share with "A l'entrade" an existence on the margin of the courtly tradition.

Recognizing Provençal influence eliminates a chronological bias: what cannot be labeled "courtly" in the French lyrics is easily named "pre-courtly," by which is meant a sort of lyric that has not yet absorbed Provençal love doctrine. Whatever such lyrics may have been like, it is clear that our Old French poems, transmitted from the early part of the thirteenth century, follow the early imitations of Provençal songs. Moreover, "A l'entrade" certainly cannot be considered "pre-courtly," being a fairly late form of troubadour art, and yet it will be shown that the group of poems under discussion have enough in common with "A l'entrade" that they can be viewed as part of the same tradition.

While thematically and formally these songs do not represent the pure type of the courtly lyric, they are nonetheless part of the courtly society of their time. Little as is known about that society itself, we have shown that "A l'entrade," or a poem like it, "Kalenda maia," can function side by side with the love *chanson* in the convincingly portrayed social context of *Flamenca*. Something similar is true for the earliest French songs of this kind: in the romance of *Guillaume de Dôle* they form part of a lyrical collection that includes songs of well-known Provençal and French troubadours.

By studying the narrative of *Guillaume de Dôle* in detail, essential facts can be learned about the "setting-in-life" of our lyrics. This also adds another level of understanding for the comparatist: as Erich Köhler has argued convincingly, the courtly lyric flourished in the south, while the greater moral rigor of the north caused courtly themes to be expressed more explicitly in the form of romances. This theory applies mostly to the works of Chrétien de Troyes, several decades prior to our material.[1]

Whatever the exact chronology of Flamenca and Guillaume de Dôle, it is clear that they are to be placed in a period of extensive contact between north and south. In spite of Flamenca's southern spirit, the fact alone that it treats love seriously in romance form, in particular that it treats Archimbaut in the way it does, shows that it has partly adopted a northern perspective. We know for a fact that the author of Flamenca knew French courtly romances.[2]

Guillaume de Dôle, on the other hand appears to have abandoned the moral aspirations characteristic of Chrétien's time in having its plot dominated by the incorporated lyrics. The courtly song ethic appears also to have become much more widely and easily accepted in the north; "A l'entrade," the central poem in the discussion so far, only exists in a jongleur manuscript of the north.

The troubadour ethic had been spreading at this time not only geographically, but also socially. As far as we know, Marie of Champagne and Andreas Capellanus and their friends were never persecuted by the church, although they made statements as heretical as many a troubadour.[3] A heresy is only seen as a danger after it has begun to develop into a generally prevailing fashion.

The poetic form of our songs, and certainly of "A l'entrade," shows an awareness of a possible social interpretation and a substantial neglect of speculative depth. Troubadour love, always on the fringe of adultery, has become precariously close to being seen as a social credo. Such a development may not have had much real effect on the society of the time, but it is bound to have had far-reaching repercussions on the poetry itself.

For any poetry in the style of "A l'entrade," where theme and form are closely interrelated, both content and form would be affected by the dynamics thus set into motion. We are faced with a literary period, probably a very short one, of intense experimentation and almost a chaos of forms and themes. A glimpse into this world is offered through the romance of Guillaume de Dôle and its lyrics. Much more than a chansonnier would be able to, it shows the kinds of songs which could co-exist in one social framework. Guillaume de Dôle thus offers, among other things, the first full test of a chanson d'histoire and the earliest texts of the rondeau and virelai form, presented under the name of caroles. While one tends to consider these texts only as prototypes of later "regular" genres, they will be treated here as what we believe they really are: unique poetic events in which standard material is consciously rearranged in order to express a complex idea.

It was not a difficult task to choose one poem as an example for the *chanson d'histoire*, since "La bele Aiglentine" is the only one which appears in full, the others being reported in a fragmentary state. Furthermore, this poem contains what appears to be a miniature version of the plot of the romance itself, while "C'est la jus,": the *carole* I have chosen, contains a set of characters comparable to those of "A l'entrade."

I: "La bele Aiglentine"

The song "La bele Aiglentine" is composed in the same decasyllabic lines which are the most frequent measure in the Old French epic. As in most epics, too, the stanzas are of varied length, and each of its eight stanzas is held together by its own particular assonance and rhythm. What distinguishes the form of this song from a portion of a decasyllabic epic, however, is its division into many short stanzas and the presence of a refrain at the end of each stanza. The following version is taken from Bartsch. Where, however, there is a discrepancy between the original manuscript and Bartsch, I have followed the original:[4]

La bele Aiglentine

Stanza 1 La bele Aiglentine   en roial chamberine
devant sa dame   cousoit une chemise.
ainc n'en sot mot   quant bone amor l'atise.
   or orrez ja
   conment la bele Aiglentine esploita.

Stanza 2 Devant sa dame   cousoit et si tailloit;
mes ne coust mie   si com coudre soloit:
ele s'entroublie,   si se point en son doit.
la soe mere   mout tost s'en apercoit.
   or orrez ja
   conment la bele Aiglentine esploita.

Stanza 3 'Bele Aiglentine,   deffublez vo sorcot,
je voil veoir   desoz vostre gent cors.
'non ferai, dame,   la froidure est la morz.'
   or orrez ja
   conment la bele Aiglentine esploita.

Stanza 4 'Bele Aiglentine,   q'avez a empirier
que si vos voi   palir et engroissier?'
'ma douce dame,   ne le vos puis noier:
je ai ame   un cortois soudoier,
le preu Henri,   qui tant fet a proisier.
s'onques m'amastes,   aiez de moi pitie.'
   or orrez ja
   coment la bele Aiglentine esploita.

Stanza 5 'Bele Aiglentine,   vos prendrai il Henris?'
'ne sai voir, dame,   car onques ne li quis.'
'bele Aiglentine,   or vos tornez de ci.
tot ce li dites   que ge li mant Henri,
s'il vos prendra   ou vos lera einsi.'
'volentiers, dame,'   la belle respondi.
   or orrez ja
   conment la bele Aiglentine esploita.

Stanza 6 Bele Aiglentine   s'est tornee de ci
et est venue   droit a l'ostel Henri.
li quens Henris   se gisoit en son lit.
or orrez ja   que la bele li dit.
   or orrez ja
   conment la bele Aiglentine esploita.

Stanza 7 'Sire Henri, velliez vos ou dormez?
ja vos requiert Aiglentine au vis cler,
se la prendrez a moullier et a per.
'oil,'dit Henris, 'onc joie n'oi mes tel.'
or orrez ja
conment la bele Aiglentine esploita.

Stanza 8 Oit le Henris, molt joianz en devint:
il fet monter chevaliers trusqu'a vint;
si enporta la bele en son pais
et l'espousa, riche contesse en fist.
grant joie en a
li quens Henris quant la bele Aiglentine a.

In comparison to "A l'entrade," the metrical structure of "La bele Aiglentine" is of a coarser grain, and lacking in completeness and complexity. However, the simplicity and directness of its structure is a good poetic vehicle for the forceful expression of the poetic idea.

Stanza 1 introduces the theme and setting of the poem. We learn from the adjective roial that the beautiful Aiglentine is a princess. She is sitting with her mother in the ladies' bower, sewing a garment. But she does it badly, because she is in love. Line 1 introduces the heroine and describes her surroundings--the setting in the ladies' chamber suggests the company of at least one other woman. Furthermore, the first line introduces us to the style of the poem: the obviously ornamental epithets bele and roial remind one of the formalized language of the epic. Even more stilted than that is the Leonine rhyming of Aiglentine, which falls before the caesura, with chamberine, at the end of the line; the suffix -ine of chamberine is added to create the particular effect. In comparison, the style of the next line and a half are remarkably simple, but in the second half of line 3 we again encounter stilted epithetal language. This discrepancy in style requires an explanation. Especially surprising is the abrupt change of style at the caesura of line 3, and this lends a slight tinge of punch-line irony to the second half of the line: one is tempted to look for a down-to-earth meaning for the phrase "bone amor l'atise" (roughly rendered, "because she is overcome with the fire of good love"). If one takes the fire as temperature, the implication is that Aiglentine is suffering from body heat due to pregnancy and that for the same reason she is clumsy with her needlework. This interpretation also makes the refrain more intelligible: the repetition of "conment la bele Aiglentine esploita" ("what beautiful Aiglentine accomplished") is more forceful if it is also a reminder that there was an urgent matter which she needed to attend to. Nothing has been made explicit at this point, the end of the first stanza, but the audience can start guessing. And so does Aiglentine's mother.

Thus, the first stanza introduces the theme of "la bele Aiglentine" as the story of a young, attractive, unmarried princess who is probably expecting a child and has to do something to save her honour. The refrain announces that the song will tell us how Aiglentine coped with the situation. The positioning of this statement in the refrain, rather than as a single line of the poem, underlines the importance of decisive action as a theme and a character trait.

In summary, the first stanza serves very well as an introduction in several ways. Besides marking the beginning of the song, it gives us important information concerning the subject of the tale, her name, her beauty, and her aristocratic connections, and also important information concerning the location of the opening dialogue. In the second line, further information concerning the setting prepares the ground for an intimate conversation between two women. Line 3 introduces an element of surprise and suspense. The allusion to the fire of love suggests that a narrative will follow.

The refrain plays an important role in the poem, and this is apparent from the start. It is not an integral part of the story, but is directed, instead, to the audience. Through its position and its wording, the refrain retards the development of the story, heightens the suspense introduced by line 3, and focuses our attention on the essential part of the story, namely the brave and resourceful deed of Aiglentine. "or orres ja," the first line of the refrain, could be translated as "You will yet hear," or "You will hear in due course." It prepares us not to expect a solution to Aiglentine's problem much before the end of the poem, thereby reinforcing the impression that the solution to the mysterious love problem is the crux of the narrative. Thus, in stanza 1, the suspicion that something is wrong prepares us for conflict and charges the coming crisis with a sense of urgency.

Stanza 2 elaborates the situation as outlined in stanza 1, and a further incident brings about a dramatic confrontation between mother and daughter: Aiglentine, lost in thought, pricks her finger with a sewing needle, and her mother, who seems to have been on the alert, notices this immediately. There is a definite tonal discrepancy in this stanza between the passivity of Aiglentine and the narrative promise of the refrain. That, coupled with the confirmation that Aiglentine is distraught, promises that the plot development is still to come, and that the poem may be a fairly long one. The first three lines of stanza 2 take up the content of stanza 1; line 1 of stanza 2 summarizes the first two lines of the poem, while lines 2 and 3 of the second stanza resume and expand the observation, made in line 3 of the preceding stanza, that Aiglentine has become clumsy with her sewing. By capsuling the description of the surroundings and expanding that of the girl's pensiveness, the second stanza becomes subtly more explicit. Furthermore, line 3 is placed to imply a kind of poetic stage direction, namely that the mother is about to speak in the following stanza.

In the third stanza, the mother makes it clear that she intends to probe into the secret which has been on her mind, and which has been brought to the attention of the audience. She tells Aiglentine to take off her gown so that she can see the contours of her body. There is a possible indication of fruition, as well, through the reference in the previous stanza to pricked blood, connotive of defloration. If so, this hint is immediately taken up in the third stanza with the suggestion that the girl's body has lost its maidenly slimness. More practically, the pricking of the finger draws the mother's attention to the daughter's body. Following the eyes of the mother, we notice the figure of Aiglentine as well, and we notice the gown which covers a less and less well-kept secret. Through these devices--the images of deflowering and pregnancy, the perception of the daughter's pricked finger and her swelling body, the move from the mention of the mother to her initiating a dialogue--there is a definite link between the second stanza and the third, just as we noted a link between stanzas 1 and 2. This link is important not only in holding the poem together, but in gradually intensifying the story from description to dialogue, and ultimately into drama. By stanza 3 we already know that the poem will be a narrative and not a lyric. As we are drawn hypnotically into the scene and feel the atmosphere of disgrace, the brutal request of the mother becomes more an accusation than a suspicion. Thus stanza 3 introduces a new mood to the poem--one of confrontation and suspense.

Not only, however, does the mother speak in stanza 3, but Aiglentine responds to her mother's command, albeit in a negative way. In the first two stanzas, the mother and the daughter are silent companions, but their proximity did not suggest communication. The feeling of distance between them was hinted at by the absorption of the daughter in her own troubled thoughts. The acknowledgment that the mother is aware of her daughter's worries, and to some extent shares them, brings them together to some extent, but also creates a mood of conflict. The mother expresses her suspicions, the daughter avoids a direct reply, thereby heightening her mother's worries and drawing us into the drama. The narrative is already accelerating as description gives way to dialogue.

Since the mother has been unable to satisfy her curiosity by insinuation, she is forced, in stanza 4, to enquire directly. She wonders, in lines 1 and 2, what ailment has caused her daughter to become so pale and so rotund. Since there are not very many plausible explanations, Aiglentine does well to tell the truth: she has made love to a courteous soldier, noble Henri, who has earned much praise. She implores her mother to have pity on her. With this, the stanza is completed and the refrain follows. Our knowledge of the situation parallels, of course, that of the mother. We, like her, have been left to guess, and at last are told the simple facts. The shocking nature of the disclosure is toned down by the directness of the girl's relation, and by her pleas for pity. A change in narrative direction occurs here in the strength of Aiglentine's reply. Clearly, she is no weakling, to be bullied or scolded by her mother; rather, she is as capable of undertaking direct action now as she was previously able to involve herself in a forbidden and dangerous love relation. The mother, in other words, is not to be the central figure in the poem. Fears that arise regarding the distressful situation Aiglentine has found herself in are at least partially offset by the repetition of the refrain--Aiglentine _is_ going to do something to help herself out of her crisis, and we will yet hear what it is to be. Certainly, however, the stanza does not leave us, or the mother, with a feeling of certainty that all will go well. The fifth line, in which the renowned lover is named, could almost have come straight from a heroic epic, yet the stanza concludes rather pitifully in a plea to the mother for understanding.

We have come nearly midway in the poem and certain important developments have taken place. The poem has been established as a narrative, and Aiglentine has come forward as the central figure in the story and as the bearer of the action. The story is to be one of conflict, with the honour of a beautiful girl at stake, and although we know that something will be done about it, we do not yet have the reassurance that all will be well.

In the next stanza, it is again the mother's turn to speak. The address "bele Aiglentine" has begun to assume a conjuring note. Her question "vos prendr i il Henris?" sounds a little cutting, and suggests that she has been hanging onto her daughter's every word and is now trying to snatch her out of her dreams with the bitterness of a dejected mother. The daughter's reply--"Ne sai voir, dame, car onques ne li quis"-- is impudent and leads her mother to demand that something be done. Repeating the conjuring term "bele Aiglentine," the mother tells her daughter to leave the room and to go to Henri. She tells her daughter what she should ask of the lover: "s'il vos prendra ou vos lera einsi." There is an implication that the mother is throwing the daughter out of the house, certainly that she is now the director of the course of events. This is immediately offset, however, by the immediacy, even eagerness, of Aiglentine's reply: "voluntiers, dame, la bele respondi."

With this stanza, the mother's part in the story is over, and the remaining three stanzas are left to Aiglentine and Henri, who depart finally for Henri's homeland where they are married. The mother's role has been to elicit the information with which the narrative begins, and to bring the story down to a practical level. From Aiglentine's point of view, love and romance would appear in a rather picturesque light suitable to the girl's beauty, the splendidness of her chambers, and the charming image of the young girl bent over her embroidery, flushed by thoughts of love. Not so from the mother's perspective. The girl's pensiveness spoils her sewing as certainly as her love affair has spoiled her figure and endangered her honour. While the daughter pleads for pity, the mother demands action. No doubt, the daughter has inherited her vitality from her mother, because she readily complies with the mother's requests, leaving off her coyness and her day dreams.

Quite apart from the doubt which Aiglentine's mother obviously has about the romance, the happy end of the story is no less, than fantastic. Aiglentine's position in society would be hopeless unless her relation to Henri becomes legitimate. Henri could easily disappear as soon as the affair should prove embarrassing. A happy ending is therefore far from certain when Aiglentine sets out to propose to Henri, and the alternative to success would be unpleasant for Aiglentine. The events unfold under the shadow of what would be likely to happen in a similar situation, with a hint, too, of what the mother probably fears will happen. Thus, the practical note set by the mother is continued throughout the poem by us: we share her concerns even after she has ceased to be part of the story. The presence of the mother in the poem, therefore, has not only provided information and induced the action, it has foreshadowed a confrontation with Henri through the initial confrontation between mother and daughter, and it has established an important tonal tension between romantic fantasy and social fact.

The uncertainty of Aiglentine's fate is not resolved until the very end of the poem. Stanza 6 provides a narrative introduction to the final climax and already prepares us for possible unexpected turns in the story. There is a touch of suspense arising from the uncertainty of Aiglentine's intention: does she really believe she will be successful, or can she think of nothing more than merely visiting with Henri? The ambiguity of the situation becomes still more apparent in line 3, where we learn that Henri, who is now identified as a count, has already gone to bed. Is the time at all suitable for a visit? Is Henri in bed in anticipation of a visit from his mistress? Or is he simulating illness or fatigue in order to avoid a scene? How do the two feel about each other, and how will they cope with this confrontation? Our feelings of suspense are heightened by the final half of the last line, in which we learn that it is Aiglentine who will speak first.

The beginning of stanza 7 accentuates the ambiguity of the situation. Henri, it seems, has shown no sign that he has noticed Aiglentine's arrival, for she asks him whether he is asleep or awake. It is fairly clear that Aiglentine is visiting Henri at a time when people can be expected to be asleep and that she does not mind doing so, perhaps because she has done it before. Here again, the implications are more dramatic than the actual words. If nothing else, we now know at least that the mother has sent her daughter out into the twilight. In the next two lines Aiglentine proposes marriage. Simply and directly, Henri accepts: "Oil, dit Henris, onc joie noi mes tel." This is all that Henri has to say in the entire poem, and the rest is action rather than speech. The poem could not end here, since we cannot be assured that Henri, about whom we know nothing, does not mean his words ironically. Has Aiglentine been redeemed or degraded through the promise that Henri has given her?

Stanza 8, the final stanza, does not immediately remove our doubts. Line 1 tells us that Henri becomes very happy, but this could again be ironical. Line 2 is ambiguous, since the preparations for a journey could be a first step towards Henri's flight. In line 3 we learn that he is taking Aiglentine with him, but is she going as his bride or as his mistress? The last line finally gives us the information we want, namely that Henri has married Aiglentine and made her a mighty countess. The refrain is altered, here, and in it we are told of Henri's great joy at having Aiglentine as his bride. Henri's joy tells us more than simply of Aiglentine's success, however. We have seen that the mother plays an important role in the first five stanzas of the poem. In the last three, the confrontation shifts from mother-daughter to lover-beloved. We have become disturbed not only about Aiglentine's fate, but also about her reputation: is she the victim/accomplice of an immoral relationship, or the uncautious lover of a noble soldier? Henri's acceptance of her, his own lofty social status, and his joy in their marriage assure us that Aiglentine is really the beautiful girl the first stanza has led us to suppose.

The importance of "La bele Aiglentine" clearly does not lie in its structural complexity, but in its narrative development. The impression it gives is that it is poetically imperfect because it is only partially original, and that it is, perhaps, in part an imitation of an imperfectly understood form. We have noticed several instances in which the style appears stilted, as if taken from an heroic epic. The figure of Aiglentine emerges through the persons of the mother and the lover, and by means of dialogue and action, her character does not speak for itself. Despite these uneven qualities, however, the poem emerges as a powerful and successful narrative. Its success arises from its structure of confrontation, and that is to be found on several levels. The confrontation between mother and daughter initiates the story, provides necessary background, and gives Aiglentine the stimulus to make her proposal to Henri. Equally important, the mother's perspective and her lack of knowledge parallel our own, so that we learn with her, are afraid with her, and, like her, wait in the background for the outcome of the proposal in the final stanzas. The refrain is directed specifically at us, and thus there is a subtle connection between the internal structure of the narrative and the outside world, made possible by the dual role of the mother. The second confrontation is, of course, that between Aiglentine and Henri. Unlike the mother-daughter confrontation, we are not involved in any specific way. Henri represents the element of the unknown, and the whole outcome of the story and Aiglentine's fate rest on his reaction to the proposal. The two parts of the poem are, due to the different natures of the two confrontations, on a very different tonal level. Rather than creating an unevenness, however, this shift in tone works poetically, and for the reason that a much larger confrontation ties both parts together. Central to the poem is the conflict of social ethics--Aiglentine's love longings against the harsh realities of dishonour, pregnancy and social position. Thus, both the mother and the lover represent the world as it is in contrast to the dreamy romanticism of first love. That the story ends happily is an affirmation that love and beauty need not be destroyed by the brutal facts of life.

II: "C'est la jus"

"C'est la jus"[5] is a *carole*, and it is interesting to note first the round structure of the poem before we turn to a general discussion of the romance of *Guillaume de Dôle*. We will then return to "C'est la jus," and to the *carole* in general, in order to take a look at the social context of the genre, as expressed in the romance, and at the dance form in particular.

The *carole* appears in the romance as follows:

523 C'est la jus desoz l'olive,
Robins enmaine s'amie:
La fontaine i sort serie
desouz l'olivete.
E non deu! Robins enmaine
bele Mariete.

I base my examination of this poem on the assumption that, for all practical purposes, the present text is complete. The poem is based on a regular, seven syllable structure, with five syllables in lines 4 and 6, each line ending on an extra or elided "e." We are presented with a scene in brief composed of an olive tree, a spring, Robin, and his girl friend Mariete. What strikes the reader right away is the parallel arrangement of scenery and character:

C'est la jus desoz l'olive, ...scenery
Robins enmaine s'amie: . . . . character
La fontaine i sort serie

desouz l'olivete . . . . .scenery
E non deu! Robins enmaine
bele Mariete . . . . .character

Through the parallelism of the poem a seeming contradiction appears. It would seem, on the one hand, that scenery and character are structurally differentiated within the poem, because they appear in a regular parallel alternation, while, on the other hand, Robin and Mariete appear to be integral parts of the scene; we are not told whence, how, why or for how long they have come to the place. This parallelism resolves itself, however, as we look closer at the poem and see that parallelism is not the poem's only principle of composition.

In a review of the whole poem, we see that polarisation between scenery and character is counteracted by that between movement and the static: Robin, in motion, leading his girl, appears in a fixed area "under the olive tree." But the fountain, a part of the nature scenery, is also in motion, a kind of motion which, just like that of Robin, could be called static, since it remains fixed at the particular place under the tree. Having thus singled out Robin and the fountain as agents of motion, and the olive tree as standing for the static principle, the figure of Mariete is easy to place. Just as the olive tree is linked to the movement of the fountain, so is Mariete brought into motion by Robin, who leads her by the hand. With a polarisation that has Robin and the fountain on one side and Mariete and the olive tree on the other, the poem, if we disregard for a moment the deictic introduction "c'est la jus," ends where it has begun. In a provisional manner, we may already formulate the idea that the parallelism of the poem is supplemented by a circular structure.

While the polarisation between movement and the static is here, a circular structure of the poem can be seen as a major fact of its composition, if the polarisation at its basis is somehow hinted at in the beginning of the poem. If we look at the first four lines, which are separated from the end by the deictic marker "E non Deu!," it can be observed that at the beginning and at the end of the part under consideration the same reference to the olive tree occurs. Lines 1 and 4 thus making almost the same statement, the comparison between the two middle lines, suggested also by the rhyme of "amie" and "serie," is forced upon the reader. The predominant images of the inner parts in this parallel structure are Robin and the fountain, the existence of Mariete and the olive tree being only hinted at in "amie" and the adverb of place "i," respectively. With the equation of Robin and the fountain, the thought of an opposition between movement and the static basis has been laid.

In the first four lines the circular structure is also prepared technically through the parallelism that we have just observed, insofar as the repetition of the image of the olive tree leads over into the general rounding-off of the scene.

In a circular structure we would expect the clear appearance of an unrepeated middle, an axle around which the other parts are arranged. Looking for an unrepeated image, we quickly find it in the third line--"La fontaine i sort serie." Apart from its structural imbedding into the poem, this line is joined logically to the rest of the statement only through the adverb of place "i." Around this middle the rest of the line stands in axle symmetric balance, semantically, through the continuation of the fountain image after the adverb, diagrammatically, in the surrounding of the fixed point by movement, and metrically, in the equal number of syllables before and after the i. Working our way from the middle to the beginning and to the end of the poem (still disregarding the deictic factors "c'est la jus" and "E non Deu!"), we arrive at the following list of symmetric correspondences: "la fontaine" and "sort serie," "s'amie" and "desouz l'olivete," "Robins enmaine" and "Robins enmaine," "desoz l'olive" and "bele Mariete." The circular structure and the polarisation between movement and stillness at its base have two evident results: the characters are linked much more with the scenery than the superficially parallelistic structure would let one suppose, and the poem appears as an autonomous entity that does not formally require a continuation. As a consequence, the scene portrayed by the poem stands in isolation from any temporal continuity; we are dealing with a locus amoenus or pastoral idyll, a fact that is underscored by the traditionally pastoral connotations of the names Robin and Mariete.

Having acknowledged the idyllic nature of the song, we can see the deictic expressions "cest la jus" and "e non Deu!" in their just place. "C'est la jus" is like a finger that points from an unspecified "outside" to the idyll. Such a beginning necessarily implies a certain importance of the following statement, an expectation that is fulfilled by its increasingly emotional statements. "Desoz l'olive" is still a fairly neutral statement, more interest is aroused by "Robins enmaine s'amie," since the introduction of characters creates suspense. "La fontaine i sort serie," in accentuating by comparison with the previous line the suspended movement of the scene, draws our imagination closer into the particular grammar of the poem. The following total absorbing of the mind into the locus amoenus is reflected in the affective diminutive "l'olivete." Here the initial deictic impulse is reinforced by the exclamation "e non Deu!," but this impulse, rather than coming from the outside, appears much more as a logical consequence of the poem's emotional development. The object of the climactic excitement is the repeated view of Robin and his girl.

Since the exclamation "e non Deu!" also interrupts the sequence of images, the two pastoral figures, in their final climactic appearance, stand independent of the scenery, only the rhyme of "l'olivete" and "Mariete" maintaining a slender and, through the diminutive endings, emotional connection between the first part and the final climax. The distinction between the characters and the scenery, elaborated in the parallelistic structure and counteracted by the axial symmetry of the poem, is thus underlined by the exclamation, thereby allowing for a relative detachment of Robin and Mariete from the scenic background.

The foregoing structural analysis of the two poems allows for certain tentative conclusions to be drawn about the genres which the poems represent. "La bele Aiglentine" displays something of the structure of an improvised Provençal dancing song, although it is clear that the potential of this structure has not been exploited to the full. While the form of the poem would seem to be an imitation from the Provençal, the poetic means which have been used to create the song come, not from the Provençal tradition, but from the Old French epic. As we have seen, the verse form is decasyllabic and many of the verbal forms are epic in nature, too.

A third factor, which will be discussed in detail later in the chapter, is the social and ethic question. Unlike its counterpart in Provençal poetry, the heroine of this poem is a young, unmarried girl, and this different social frame of reference has an important role in the different development of the genre. The poetic accomplishment of the chanson d'histoire lies in the fact that, despite its heavy dependence on the form of the Provençal poetry and on the poetic devices of the Old French epic, it manages to remain a distinctive poetic genre. Put another way, the distinctiveness of the genre from the Old French epic underlines the fact that it has a separate structure.

With "C'est la jus" and the carole in general another development can be identified. Like "A l'entrade," the verse form of "C'est la jus" is that of the common measure in an experimental variation. Form predominates as poetic goal, and the result is a poetic realisation of the perfect circular structure. This achievement is only possible through the complete absence in the poem of dramatic movement.

In summary, the Provençal dancing song is imported into French, directly or indirectly, in two very different forms. Firstly, in the chanson d'histoire, dramatic movement takes the foreground, with the result of a certain unevenness in the form. Secondly, in the carole, the form is perfected to such a degree that all dramatic movement is lost.

In light of the foregoing, the question arises as to the reason for this discrepancy between form and content. The answer is to be found in a study of the ethical question of the courtly love ideal. In the Provençal tradition, the pivot of the dramatic form is the figure of the jealous husband, while in the French versions, this figure is avoided. In the carole, the figure has not yet been devised, while in the chanson d'histoire, as we have briefly mentioned, the heroine has been changed from the married woman to the unmarried girl. For a deeper look at this question, I will now turn to a study of the romance in which both poetic genres first appear, the romance of Guillaume de Dôle.

III: The Plot of Guillaume de Dôle

The examination of the Roman de la Rose ou de Guillaume de Dôle will provide us with a general insight into the nature of the Old French dancing song. The romance has long been used as a document in the study of the Old French lyric. Written in the first third of the thirteenth century, the romance contains 46 songs of several kinds, some of them only fragments, but all, unlike the "Kalenda maia" in Flamenca, without alteration to their metrical form. This technique appears for the first time in Guillaume de Dôle, as I shall henceforth call the romance, and, according to the author, probably Jean Renart, is unprecedented. Even more noteworthy is the fact that Guillaume de Dôle is the first datable source of the two poetic genres which we are studying, the chanson d'histoire or chanson de toile and the chanson de carole. I will consider the romance not as a mere document but as the poetic context of the songs, a method that has already proven useful in my short consideration of the "Kalenda maia" contained in Flamenca. There, the functional relationships between the romance and the lyric proved to be mutual, and the lyric to be part of the romance even in its metrical adjustment. Although in Guillaume de Dôle the songs, if we disregard for now the fragmentary state of some, have retained their own form, the author declares them an integral part of the work:

> s'est avis a chascun et samble
> que cil qui a fet le romans
> qu'il trovast toz les moz des chans,
> si afierent a ceuls del conte.
>
> (26-29)

It is, then, only logical that in discussing the lyrics, the whole context of the romance has to be considered.

After summarizing the plot and describing the characters, which I will consider within their time perspectives, I will discuss some literary connections between Guillaume de Dôle and earlier works, and I will enquire into the functions of various lyric genres within the romance. First I will discuss the chansons d'histoire, because their miniature plots bear a strong resemblance to the plot of the narrative context, and then the caroles. Of special importance to the inquiry will be the primitivist context in which the caroles are placed. Literary primitivism is generally characteristic of Guilaume de Dôle, and it will be more fully discussed in the relation between the jongleur and his patron and in the particular way in which the chansons d'amour are inserted into the romance and understood by the characters. Having made a survey of both the romance and of the various kinds of its lyrical inserts, I will point to some essential thematic differences between Guillaume de Dôle and its carole inserts on the one hand and Flamenca and the Provencal dancing song on the other.

The descent of the plot from an old fairy tale[7] is not only reflected in its rather fantastic "happy end," but also in certain idiosyncrasies of the style, which Félix Lecoy has described in the introduction to his edition of the text.[8] One of these particularities, the author's reliance on the reader's ability to supply missing links in the narrative,[9] makes it somewhat difficult to give a coherent summary. The main characters are Guillaume, who is the title hero, his sister Lienor, the German emperor Conrad, who falls in love with Lienor and wants to marry her (which he finally does), and the emperor's major-domo, who makes a villainous attempt to soil Lienor's reputation.

Minor but essential rôles are played by Juglet, the emperor's jongleur, through whom Conrad first learns of Guillaume's and Lienor's existence, and by the mother of the two: she indiscretely tells the major-domo, who by spying has found out about the emperor's love for Lienor, of a birthmark in the shape of a rose--hence the title Roman de la Rose--which her daughter carries on one of her thighs. Although the major-domo has never seen the heroine, the knowledge of this intimate detail enables him to pretend that he has slept with her, when the emperor finally reveals to him the name of his prospective bride. As the exploits of the major-domo show, the plot is based on a neat division, partly geographical in nature, between life at the emperor's court and Guillaume's and Lienor's poor home in France. Lienor's brother, as soon as he has left home by special invitation from Conrad, becomes assimilated into the carefree life of an emperor's retainer. From Guillaume's departure to the point where the emperor summons his retainers to the court that he will be holding on the first of May in Mainz (he intends to propose to them his marriage to Lienor), the action is centered on the tournaments and joyful reunions of knights in arms. Through his valor and good manners, Guillaume gradually comes up in the world, and the emperor makes him his closest companion. For the love intrigue itself, Guillaume has mainly the function of a go-between: the story deals in length with his good fortune as a knight, whereby his, and by implication, his sister's, social status is improved, a sine qua non for her marriage with Conrad. Other than being all that is expected of a valiant knight, Guillaume does not show any initiative that would characterize him in a particular way. During the whole narrative he never returns home, not even when he has heard that his sister has brought shame on the family.

The two mobile characters, in the sense that they travel on their own initiative from one scene to the other, are the major-domo and Lienor, and they become the principal opponents in the story. If considered outside a fairy-tale atmosphere, some of the major-domo's arguments against a marriage between Conrad and Lienor are not so unreasonable. After Conrad has announced to him his marriage plans, the major-domo begins a rather diplomatic and business-like discussion. As if he did not already know the answer, his first question is:

> Est si vostre cuers apoiez
> a une feme plus qu'a autre?
> (3508-09)

The emperor having replied in the affirmative, the major-domo immediately asks two further questions:

> Dont est ele dame de France,
> ou fille le roi ou sa suer?
> (3514-15)

and

> Prendres vos i terre, ou avoir,
> ou amis? Icë i prent on.
> (3518-19)

As pretty and good a young woman as Lienor may be, in terms of social rank she does not even exist as a marriage choice for an emperor. The major-domo's objections mainly fail because of his sordid intrigue, which the narrator imputes to his envy of Guillaume's favoured position and, ultimately, because the events follow the rules of a fairy-tale. After Guillaume and we, the readers, have been informed of Conrad's intent to marry Lienor--let us keep in mind for later that the girl still knows nothing of her good furtune--the major-domo finds out the secret by listening in on a conversation between his lord and Guillaume. Under the pretext of some urgent business in his domains, he and some of his companions leave the palace and make a quick journey to Guillaume's home. There he intends to speak with the girl and, allegedly at the request of his lord, with Guillaume's mother, just to find out what their intentions are and what kind of people they are. Part of his plan fails. He cannot speak to Lienor or even see her, because she has been ordered to stay in her own room together with her hand-maid as long as Guillaume is not at home:

> que nuls hom ne la puet veoir
> puis que ses freres n'est çaienz.
> (3338-39)

With her mother the major-domo has more luck. As a sign of his drüerie,"strong affection," he presents her with a very costly ring, and so leads their conversation onto a more intimate level.[10] The widowed mother cannot resist so much charm, becomes very talkative and gives the enemy a detailed description of "la rose desor la cuisse" (336-67.) Armed with this information, he confronts the emperor, who has been under the illusion that his intention to marry Lienor was not known to his entourage. He states that he knows the girl very well, and that he, the major-domo, has personally deflowered her, "qu'il a eü son pucelage" (3586).

Guillaume, informed by the consternated emperor, believes the story after hearing of the rose, the existence of which he has always thought a secret between him and his mother. Following this, the romance shows us an enraged Guillaume, who is slowly consumed by his anger, a nephew of his, who suddenly appears from nowhere to console Guillaume and to travel to the plessis with the intention of killing Lienor, a mother who confesses her indiscretion, faints and laments that she will from now on have lost her son Guillaume. We have to understand that in his new situation, as protégé of the emperor, he cannot have anything to do with a mother and sister who have soiled their reputation.

But now, in the moment of general distress, Lienor shows that sewing and embroidery are not her only talents. She herself goes to Mainz, where she formulates an intrigue to expose the major-domo's treason and to restore her own reputation. Since she is completely unknown to the emperor and his entourage, she can work as from an ambush. She secures the help of a servant with good diplomatic qualities, who presents himself to the major-domo with precious gifts as the messenger of a mysterious Châtelaine de Dijon. As Lienor has directed him, he gives the major-domo the message that the Châtelaine de Dijon regrets having been so nasty and sends the gifts as a sign of her submission. If he still wants to be her lover he must wear the precious belt with a purse and jewels that she has sent right next to his skin. The major-domo is astonished, for he has not been lately in contact with anyone of that name. But he likes the jewelry well enough and puts the belt on, so tightly that his skin becomes red.[11] After these preparations, Lienor appears at the emperor's court in time for the celebration of the first of May, attracting with her beauty the frantic admiration of all men and the respect of the women. The emperor, alerted by the news of the arrival of a beautiful, fairy-like creature, comes out of his room, together with his major-domo and other retainers. Lienor approaches him and accuses the major-domo of having raped her and of having taken her belt, clasp and purse as a trophy. Since she can describe the objects in every detail, the major-domo's plea of innocence is unconvincing. But he violently denies his guilt and, having been immersed to the top of his head in holy water, is proven innocent of the crime. Having established thus that the major-domo has never had anything to do with her, Lienor discloses her identity. There is no further obstacle to a happy marriage and a generally happy end.

Conrad, during all of this, remains a fairly static person. The beginning of the romance describes him as an ideal emperor who keeps his country in peace and wants only the best for his subjects. He knows Lienor only from hearsay, first through his jongleur and then also through the report of his squire Nicole, whom he has sent to France to invite Guillaume to his court. One of his permanent qualities is a certain youthful cunning with which he strives against the sober raison d'état of his retainers. Their advice to the contrary, he first thinks life too exciting for marriage. When he has decided on a very problematic match, he claims that he merely wants to follow the will of the nobles:

> Une foiz est bien que ge les
> mon voloir por fere le lor.
> (3500-01)

Even after learning that his future bride is no longer virgin, he still wishes to marry her, but he knows that this would be asking too much from his men:

> Or sachiez que li emperere
> la desirast mout a avoir,
> mes or ne l'ose mes voloir,
> qu'il set bien que ne porroit estre.
> (3904-07)

To judge from the gay life he leads--I will come to that matter later--virginity plays in fact a secondary rôle in his ethics. When he speaks to Guillaume about Lienor's maidenhood he seems mainly concerned that a possible "just impediment" could destroy his plans. His juvenile resistance to the adult world makes him an exception among the other rulers in earlier and contemporary romances and epics. In this respect he is more like Aucassin. On the other hand, the relation between sovereign and retainers in _Guillaume de Dôle_ follows earlier literature in its political aspect. The narrator himself imagines the major-domo in the likeness of Keu, the eternal spoil-sport of Arthur's round table. He is, however, not quite like Keu, just as Conrad is a much more active figure than Arthur. As Félix Lecoy has justly remarked, Keu is portrayed here "avec quelque excès comme le traître et le félon par excellence," which, if we want a more appropriate model for the major-domo, leaves us with no other choice than Ganelon. Although the author does not mention Ganelon by name, the dénouement of _Guillaume de Dôle_ is like the trial scene in the _Chanson de Roland_ in more than one aspect. Just as the Frankish nobles interceded for Ganelon, so is Conrad asked by his retainers to use clemency towards the major-domo. Since Conrad is less ruthless than Charlemagne, and since the major-domo's crime has not been quite as serious as Ganelon's, the final verdict is less cruel.

The major-domo is sent off to fight as a knight templar in the Holy Land. Beyond the intercession of the major-domo's peers, the end of _Guillaume de Dôle_ resembles that of the _Chanson de Roland_ in a deeper way, in the final settlement of the claims of all concerned. Just as in the _Chanson de Roland_ the deeper issue is not the vengeance of Roland's slaying, but Ganelon's treason against his lord, so is Lienor's acquittal from a slanderous reproach in reality just an expedient that makes her marriage possible through the general euphoria of relief. As Guillaume, her brother, has already remarked to Conrad, the real obstacle in the way of marriage is Lienor's social inferiority:

> De la fille le roi de France
> fetes querre le mariage
> par conseil de vostre barnage,
> si lessiez ore l'orfenine.
> (3040-43)

The major-domo's objections, though very crudely put, are just an echo of what Guillaume has said. We can then assume that a similar opinion might have been voiced by the nobles, had they not been busy worrying about the fate of their friend, the convicted traitor. From Conrad's perspective, the theme of the story is the right of a sovereign to a personal choice in his marriage partner.

If we consider the romance from Guillaume's point of view, it takes on a more specifically Arthurian colouring. Like Enide, so Guillaume, and to a point, Lienor are exponents of the old class of chivalry; they cherish tradition and honesty and therefore are entitled to supreme aristocratic honours. Guillaume's success at the emperor's court occurs during the absence of the overly efficient major-domo, and Lienor's marriage marks the final victory of the traditional aristocratic values. Her status as a woman follows even more than Guillaume's knighthood an Arthurian pattern. Her virtue is as serious a matter as that of Fénice in Cligès, especially so in the eyes of Lienor's family.

Her confinement to her own room during Guillaume's absence would go very much against the courtly sense of female dignity as expressed by the troubadours. Clearly we have only to compare it to the extensive freedom of the girls in the group with whom Conrad celebrates a party at the beginning of the story. Being locked up in a room is not very different from being kept, like Flamenca, in a tower by a jealous husband. The most violent reproaches against Lienor do not come from Conrad, nor from Guillaume, who has become a perfect gentleman, but from a nephew, who has this task alone in the story, a non-descript young man, whose only characteristic is his connection with Lienor's world of strict sexual morality.

The neat division between Guillaume's home and the life at the court is not just an expedient of the narrative, rather it keeps the two incompatible worlds out of intimate touch. The apparent coming together of the two worlds in the persons of Conrad and Lienor could only happen, as we have seen, in a fairy-tale world, or, as the narrator puts it, in the good old days:

> En l'Empire, ou li Alemant
> ont esté maint jor e maint an,
> si com li contes dit, segnor
> ot jadis un empereor.
>
> (31-34)

We will have to see what this world is like. Again the "good old days" are not the same for Conrad and for the plessis near Dôle. As I shall explain, the two worlds are not only divided geographically, but also, in a sense, have to be imagined at different points in history.

The age of Conrad, a time of perfect chivalry, is based on the good character of the emperor himself. In the beginning of the romance, his character is very explicitly drawn from the eyes of the reader, both through statements of the narrator as such and through his actions among his peers. Succeeding his father on the throne, he maintains peace in his empire, and despite his almost unlimited power, treats his subjects in a wise and gentle manner. Whether poor or rich, all his subjects are equal before the law. Knowing that he owns everything in his empire, he does not tax his vilains and bourgeois but, instead, receives as presents much more than he would be able to collect as taxes. Since thieves and robbers are severely punished, merchants can pass through his empire as quietly as through a monastery. Such a happy climate comes partly as a result of the sovereign's careful choice of administrative officials, which, says the narrator, he selects among his vavassors and not among the garcons, as "kings and barons now are want to do" (575-81).

Of prime importance to the narrator is the happy relationship between the emperor and his knights. He fights his wars with lance and shield, and he would not have his soldiers fight with or against the crossbowman, a new kind of soldier kept by magnates out of avarice and general meanness, for half the money of Rome. His judgement in court cannot be bribed, and he helps widows and old vavassors if he knows them to be in financial difficulty.

Conrad's wealth and power consists in a huge army of knights, whom he treats fairly well and pays well. No catle can withstand an attack from this army; but before doing anything as vulgar as using war-machinery, his knights would have eaten the wooden "defences on the walls" (113). The narrator summarizes:

> Tel tresor doit rois amasser,
> por qu'il fust. Confondre et quasser
> ses anemis, a son pié metre. (117-19)

In this manner, the picture is drawn of an emperor who could befriend such a young knight like Guillaume who maintains the old values of chivalry.

IV: Conrad's Court: A Meeting of Past and Present

But let us turn to Conrad's love pursuits and his way of celebrating the warm days of summer, the description of which comprises a good part (138-568) of his portrait. His cunning opposition to the older generation emerges here when he sends off the jalous and envieus, in order to create a more intimate party atmosphere. Armed with javelins and bugles, he leads them off to a hunt, but returns himself by an unused road. In his pavillions of silken cloth, the guests he has invited from within a distance of seven travelling days,[13] are slowly waking up. The dames, countesses and maidens, all still "em pur lor biax cors sanz mantiaus," (202) go singing to the tents of the knights errant, who stretch out their arms to receive the ladies on their beds (194-217). Conrad, who has come back on a galopping horse to tell the knights that it is high time to go over to the ladies (223), finds the initiative already taken. Lienor, who is enclosed in her room when her brother is not at home, would be strangely out of place in this company. Beautifully and lightly attired, the women are here very much in view:

> lor genz cors et lor mameletes
> les font proisier de ne sai quanz (206-07)

On the other hand, the atmosphere remains curiously chaste: the ladies singing and walking over to the slumbering knights, the knights stretching out their arms and drawing the ladies towards them--it all evokes the uniform and synchronized movements of a ballet. Although the knights errant and the ladies drawn down to their beds are obviously experiencing "more than only platonic and pure spiritual delights,"[14] the narrator, in an excess of sophistry perhaps, separates each male and female by a blanket. Everything happens before it is time to get up, but the "good time" that the guests are having seems to consist mainly in the recital of poetry:

> Dex! tant beaus chans et tant beaus diz,
> sor riches coutes, sor beaus liz,
> i ot dit, ainçois qu'il fust prime.
> (229-31)

During their morning ablution at about nine o'clock, physical contact is described more specifically:

> as dames, en lieu de touaille,
> empruntent lor blanches chemises;
> par ceste ochoison si ont mises
> lor mains a mainte blanche cuisse:
> (278-81)

But here again the narrator precludes any second thought of the readers by adding:

> (je ne di mie que cil puisse
> estre cortois qui plus demande).
> (282-83)

Certainly, as Félix Lecoy has remarked, the narrator is speaking here "avec un demi-sourire,"[15] but his ironic detachment pertains more to the ideal age as such than to specific human behaviour. Strong sexual drives, even if only implied, would hardly fit with the general ambiance. To the extent that we can speak of love here at all--it has to be underlined that no individual feelings of attachment are explicitly mentioned--Félix Lecoy is partly right that this love is a little bit more than platonic. But I would go further and say that the instances which he cites (vv. 210-215, 218-83, 5501ff, 5561ff.)[16] have nothing to do with platonic love at all. Rather we have here a reflection of Andrew the Chaplain's *amor purus*, love of a virginal character, that, among other advantages, allows maidens to acquire practical experience in the art of love, without the blemish of lost virginity.[17] The dames and knights are thus behaving quite in accordance with the established love doctrines. Centered around the youthful figure of Conrad, their actions seem adolescent in nature.

But even if we imagine all of Conrad's guests to be adolescents--and some of them are not--does the author want to present his courtly scenes seriously? The *demi-sourire* as suggested by Félix Lecoy does not go to the heart of the issue. If, instead, we understand that half smile as pertaining to the whole of the romance, we have to decide whether these individual scenes are coherent within the total context. In this way, we notice that the lack of response to sexual stimulation is well explained in the atavistic nature of Conrad's epoch. Conrad, who is the model for all his subjects, excels in moderation.

> Sa justice et s'envoiseüre
> par ert de si grant tempreüre
> q'en n'i trovast ja point d'outrage.
> (75-77)

If the moderation he and his guests show seems to go beyond what one would normally expect, we have to remember that the age of Conrad is imagined from the start as an ideal. Any kind of strongly explicit drive, be it for love or for power, does not find its place in this society. Conrad's people are naturally good even without going to church:

> Il ne pensent pas a lor ames,
> Si n'i ont cloches ne moustiers
> (qu'il n'en est mie granz mestiers)
> ne chapelains, fors les oiseaus.
> (224-27)

If we develop the idea that the birds in the wood take the place of chaplains, the emperor presides over the singing and reciting of poems that is supposed to be as good for his guests' welfare as a morning mass. Indeed, he carries immense responsibility. But his sovereign position is never asserted in an ostentatious manner, and rather seems to accrue to him through a natural and spontaneous veneration of his peers. As a sign of the equality between him and his guests, Conrad's clothes are no more costly than theirs:

> L'empereres ne se vout mie
> miex vestir que firent li autre:
> de .II. samis de l'un en l'autre
> fu la soe robe bendee.
> (242-45, also 349ff)

One of the maidens then attaches a beautiful clasp to his clothes, whereby he receives a symbol of distinction at the hands of his subject. He of course immediately reciprocates. After all, he has been wearing a very precious belt, which he now exchanges for the simple white one of the maiden.

In his generosity, he pays the debts which his and other knights have incurred at a tournament. Naturally, he is the ideal emperor for Guillaume: the five hundred pounds which Guillaume receives at his arrival are badly needed to pay for his and his two companions' expenses at court and, no less, for the debts and expenses of his mother at home.

Guillaume is one of the members of aristocratic society who make the ideal world of Conrad possible. He does not belong to the high aristocracy and is poor in comparision to Conrad's affluence. As Jouglet tells the emperor, he could not have afforded even six squires when he became a knight and together with the two companions that he can afford he acquired fame rather than affluence:

> car ses granz pris et ses renons
> et ses granz cuers et sa proece
> le porvoit si bien et adrece
> qu'il a terre et avoir asses. (769-72)

On the whole, Guillaume lives quite a pedestrian life in which lack of capital prevents him from undertaking very much as a knight. It is significant that he is able to improve his condition once he is given the opportunity and, secondly, that his lack of wealth does not prevent him from looking to the ideal moral guidelines of chivalry at its best. Whereas Conrad's world dreams quietly in its own harmony, the ascending trajectory of Guillaume's social importance exemplifies the struggle towards a better life. Guillaume's attitude would doubtlessly look more familiar to the contemporary reading public of the thirteenth century than would Conrad's dreamland: the title hero and the audience share the same desire for a harmonious society. Thus, paradoxically, Guillaume seems to live closer to us in time than Conrad although the laws of narrative demand that he live at the same time. For Guillaume the paradox is resolved by his success at court and his complete assimilation into the ideal society. This step into another world retains nevertheless a symptom of time change: it is irreversible. For, as I have aleady mentioned, he never returns home, even when his return would be logical in the development of the story.[18]

His mother and sister live in an even more complicated time perspective. Together they are the exponents of a womanhood concerned more with daily chores than with courtly pleasures. From their chamber, which Guillaume describes to the emperor's messenger as "mon tresor" (1115), come numberless embroidered cloths that are given to poor monasteries. Here, in their chamber, the mother is at work on a stole when Guillaume and Nicole enter; here is Lienor's world when her brother has left.

As we have seen, through Guillaume the ideal age and that state closer to the decadent "now" are brought together. His mother's even more pedestrian character is well exposed in her overconfident talk with the majordomo. Her human weakness makes her the most contemporary of the characters and adapted less than the others to an idealized society. However, she has an important place in the overall scheme of the tale, mainly because of her weakness.

As I have previously explained, the damage done by her indiscretion makes the union possible in terms of poetic justice. In more general terms, the mother personifies the fairy-tale spirit of Guillaume de Dôle in the sense that she, like the audience, naively expects a happy end.

This naive hope is well underlined in the contrastive juxtaposition of the reactions of Lienor, Guillaume, and their mother, when they look at the emperor's golden seal, which Lienor has just decided to wear as a clasp:

> Quant ele vit le bel cheval
> et un roi tot armé deseure:
> "Ha! dame, se Dex me sekeure,
> fet ele, or doi mout estre lie
> quant j'ai un roi de ma mesnie."
> Mis sire Guillaume s'en rit.
> "Se Deu plest et Saint Esperit,
> c'est tote honor qui vos vendra,
> fet la mere, ja n'i faudra:
> li cuers le m'a toz jors bien dit."
> (1004-13)

Lienor's childlike pleasantry that now a king may be counted among members of her family and Guillaume's earnest, slightly sulky interpretation of her words are crowned by the mother's absolute certainty: of course, Lienor will marry a king; the old lady has always known it deep down in her heart. After about a thousand verses, the narrator here lays his cards on the table: despite all difficulties, we are to expect a happy end. Only the "how" is still shrouded in a cloud of suspense.

The mother's words, of course, finally become true; and even when we meet her for the first time she has the last say in all family matters. Before the seal is broken on the emperor's letter, Guillaume shows it to his mother, he asks her advice as to which companions he should take with him to the emperor, and in the matter of Lienor's safe-keeping the mother later shows a very firm hand. But her role is more decisive than that. Let us return to the scene where Guillaume and the emperor's messenger enter the women's chamber. The two men both sit down with Lienor beside them. The mother is working quietly, and Guillaume brings the attention of his guest to the exceptional quality of her work, which is given mostly in charity to the monasteries. Some of the clothes, of course, are added to her and Lienor's own wardrobe, with the result that even the major-domo has to admit to Conrad that no woman is better dressed than Lienor. The girl seems unreal when she appears as a claimant before the emperor.

Her mother, in a very practical sense, holds the tools to her success. While a very powerful force, she never leaves the plessis and, with Lienor's departure, becomes altogether lost from sight. She and Lienor complement each other as characters, for a similar eclipsing of her daughter takes places while the mother is the focus of action. At first, Lienor is but a strikingly beautiful presence as completely under her domination as any of the beautiful embroidered designs. The beautiful adornment, a rose, on Lienor's thigh, in addition to its rôle in determining the turns of the narrative, appears as a concrete visual symbol of the girl's thorough assimilation into a bower full of embroidered garments. And in one corner of the bower, under the eyes of Guillaume and his guest, sits an older woman, who works quietly on some beautiful design, "une merveillouse fame," says Guillaume. Her shiny threads run through the whole plot, and between her and Kienor, the web of fate is thrown over the major-domo, the source of all evil.

V: The Function of the Chanson d'Histoire

Considering that it is the author who makes the plot, he delegates an astonishingly large part of it to the old woman. As a result, the marvellous seems to grow out of the story, not merely decorate it. The name of the good emperor, which was in fact used for several German rulers, the explicit geographic setting, and the use of contemporary aristocratic names,[19] would all be suited more to an historical topic than to a fairy-tale. But we still expect a happy ending to the conflict of the story from the moment in which it looms up; and our hope is based on the confident promouncement of Guillaume's and Lienor's mother. Given the impossibility of the marriage of a poor orphan to a wealthy emperor in the eyes of the audience, what makes the old woman feel in her heart that this is just what will happen to her daughter?[20] In fact, the mother draws her wisdom from the chansons d'histoire which, according to her, are songs from the old time:

> "Biaus filz, ce fu ca en arriers
> que les dames et les roines
> soloient fere lor cortines
> et chanter les chancons d'histoire! (1147-50)

A basic theme in most chansons d'histoire, from its first occurrence in Guillaume de Dôle to the songs composed by Audefroi le Bâtard, is a questionable or problematic love that comes up against serious obstacles. In most of those songs which have been preserved in full, the lovers are finally united through fast and dramatic action, in a way that reminds us of the scene where Conrad and Lienor manage to overcome their obstacles. The five pieces in Guillaume de Dôle, the only ones of immediate interest here, are fragments, with the exception of "La bele Aiglentine." I shall briefly review what is said in these poems. In the first, a mother tells her daughter that she should learn to sew and forget her love for Doon. The refrain at the end of both of the two stanzas--"Tant bon'amor fist bele Aude en Doon"--suggests that the daughter's wishes would at last be gratified (1158ff). Lienor then sings two verses of "Siet soi bele Aye as piez sa male maistre" (1183-90), in which young Aye weeps because her mistress has beaten her all day long for having loved a foreign soldier. From complete poems we know that in such a situation the lover would suddenly appear to rescue the maiden.[21] Having been asked to sing another song, Lienor recites "La bele Doe siet au vent" (1203-12), in which Doe complains that her boy-friend Doon does not keep their rendezvous under the hawthorn bush, Later in the romance, after Guillaume has become a part of Conrad's entourage, a bachelor de Normendie in Guillaume's group of knights sings "La bele Aiglentine" accompanied by Jouglet the jongleur. The last chanson d'histoire, recited by the nephew of the bishop of Liège, "Or vienent Pasques les beles en avril" (51742-93), presents Aigline, who loves Guion, clad in a beautiful dress at a public feast. This song, again fragmentary, is the first of three that are sung while Guillaume goes to join his sister, who has in the meantime become empress.

All five have been reckoned among a first group of _chansons d'histoire_, where the two sexes stand in an equal relation as in the epic, as opposed to the later group, in which women play a more emancipated role.[22] According to Raymond Joly, what characterizes the heroines of the first group is the fact that their fate is never in their own hands.[23] About Aiglentine and Doe he says that they are ". . . justement livrées à l'arbitraire de ces amants, lesquels peuvent se permettre tous les abandons et tous les injustices, et ne daignent faire attention à leurs adoratrices que lorsque celles-ci prennent les devants et viennent les en suppléer."[24] The relation of the present poems to the epic seems to be evident, as far as their versification and style are concerned.[25] But I would not agree with Raymond Joly in his understanding of the roles played by the heroines. Only in the fourth piece in _Guillaume de Dôle_ is there a dénouement, and there the lover is more lazy than unjust. Aiglentine, when she goes to speak to Count Henri (she seems to have some influence on her fate after all), finds him delighted with her plans. The young man was perhaps a little shy, and Aiglentine, far from passive, may well have been responsible for much of what occured between them. We can only say that the girl, both in the choice of her partner (he was obviously not chosen by her parents) and in her going to speak to him, is not acting quite properly. The same is true for the first three fragments. Aude's love to Doon is in opposition to the will of her mother. Aye has made the very disreputable choice of a foreign soldier for a lover. Doe has really no business waiting "au vent" for Doon. As evidence of the strict supervision of girls at the time we need no other example than that of Lienor.

When the mother is asked by Guillaume to perform a few of her songs for the enjoyment of the guests, she pretends to be reluctant, allegedly because these _chansons d'histoire_ are no longer in fashion. Whether or not they really are of so archaic a character does not matter. The mother's statement has the effect of making the songs seem ancient and, therefore, estimable. Any folkorist knows that the original folksongs were often guarded jealously by those who preserve them, and hidden from the public eye under the pretext that they are outmoded. There is nothing new in this attitude. But "old" does not count the years so much as the value of the songs. What is old is venerable. The apparent misconduct of the heroines in the _chansons d'histoire_ is crowned by success, and thus loses much of its potential censor. It indicates, instead, an "older" standard of behaviour, in essence the moral freedom of a young girl to choose her partner for herself. If, as Raymond Joly points out, "la femme n'a pas d'existence propre en dehors de sa relation avec le chevalier,"[26] we must not forget that the heroine displays a prerogative normally assumed by men in troubadour lyric. We have come far from the Chanson de Roland, where Aude, hearing about her fiancé's death, immediately renders her soul in front of Charlemagne. Aude's death mostly helps to glorify the memory of Roland, and as dramatic an event as it may be, it curtails a priori the question of her freedom of choice--she might, for example, have wished to spend the rest of her life unwed and in a monastery, as Doette, the heroine of a chanson d'histoire, later does.[27]

But the chansons d'histoire are equally out of touch with the typical troubadour situation. The woman adored by the troubadour has the power to withhold her love and her consent to this love may cause her much difficulty, but it would be inconceivable for her to take the initiative. What authority stands behind the behaviour of the heroine in the chanson d'histoire?

I will examine this question in the context of Guillaume de Dôle. Before the mother recites her songs, she seems embarrassed by the presence of the royal messenger, and, as we have seen, with just reason. Her embarrassment is understandable, since she, the brave dame who rules over a knight's mansion, is obviously to be identified with the tradition of her licentious songs. Like the dames and queens of old, she sings the chansons d'histoire while doing her embroidery, and it is an obvious analogy that she is together with her young and beautiful daughter. It is true that Lienor does not act as imprudently as any of the women in those songs. She could not even if she wanted to, for she is strictly watched. But the mother's ambition that Lienor should marry a king and Lienor's final intervention at the court are of the same fool-hardy spirit as that of the chanson d'histoire. The intrigue is more probable, since Conrad's love for Lienor is always in the foreground, giving Lienor good authority for her actions. Even though she knows only by hear-say that the emperor plans to marry her, she has to go to Mainz, if only to clear her name. Thus Conrad is able to express his love himself, and Lienor, unlike Aiglentine, does not have to propose to him. In general, Lienor seems decent and moderate in comparison with the heroines in the songs. This contrast has the effect of putting Lienor in an advantageous light, an advantage which is illusory if we keep in mind that her hope of becoming empress is no less than fantastic.

Whenever a chanson d'histoire is sung later in the romance, one is reminded of the chamber in Guillaume's mansion and of the analogy between Lienor and the heroines of the songs. In fact, both times this occurs the chanson d'histoire constitutes a specific leit-motif which announces a development in the marriage intrigue between Conrad and Lienor. In the first instance (2225-2285), Guillaume has just achieved the height of social recognition. Having thus practically closed the social gap between his sister and the emperor, the question of marriage can now be posed. Shortly thereafter, the emperor announces to Guillaume his hopes of marriage with Lienor (2969 ff). The second time (5174-5193) Guillaume, who has remained in seclusion from the rest of the world, is led by a huge crowd of knights to Lienor, who has just become empress. The prestige of the chanson d'histoire is thus obviously connected with Lienor's success. The author is biased in favour of the songs and of the young heroine, the songs providing an ethical basis for Lienor's ambitions, and the success of both Lienor and Guillaume making the songs presentable. In the light of this, a special meaning can be found in the fact that the songs appear first in a fragmentary state, later in full. Of the three songs sung by the mother and Lienor, only two couplets of each appear, and a likely explanation seems to me that at that point in the narrative the ethic of the chanson d'histoire cannot yet be provided in full. Conrad having already conceived a passion for Lienor, the errand of his squire Nicole is steeped in the atmosphere of a courtly intrigue. Lienor and Conrad are, strictly speaking, incompatible because of their different social status. The full version of a chanson d'histoire appears only after Guillaume has become part of the courtly scene. Even then, these songs do not occur near songs belonging to the courtly repertoire. A slight difference between them is that several _caroles_ are sung shortly after the _bacheler_ sings his song in full, whereas the song sung by the women is not followed by any other songs. The fragmentary fifth _chanson d'histoire_ is followed immediately by two fragmentary love _chansons_, but only after Lienor, as empress, has become firmly integrated into Conrad's world. Interesting in this instance is that the _chanson d'histoire_ is only recognizable by its refrain, any hint of dramatic development having disappeared altogether. Just as the _chanson d'histoire_ loses its essence when completely transplanted into a courtly ambiance, so Lienor, by becoming empress, is no longer identifiable with the _plessis_. Her mother is no longer mentioned, and even her brother, in approaching her, must henceforth respect her new status.

A similar transformation affects the time perspective in which Lienor is portrayed. At first but a beautiful ornament in the hand of her conservative mother, she begins to act in her own right at the moment of crisis and surprises the ladies and knights of Conrad's good old days as a marvel that seems to emerge from the past. The mother, when she says "ça en arriers" (1148), thinks of those distant by-gone days represented by her skillful embroidery and her songs. But when the festive crowd in Mainz announces an astonished "ça en arrier" (4604), the marvellous past has assumed life before their eyes in the shape of Lienor. The self-contained ideal of a former harmonious society becomes subordinate to the atavistic quest.

My observations on the chanson d'histoire agree in part with those of Edmond Faral, who first discovered evidence of their fabricated antiquity.[28] Faral's thesis is supported by an examination of the context of the oldest extant copies of chansons d'histoire, but it needs to be modified on the basis of new evidence. The idea of composing in an archaic style cannot be understood as the sudden invention of a "poète ingénieux," but has to be seen as a much broader tendency. Poetic archaism in Guillaume de Dôle must be seen as the claim of Guillaume's and Lienor's mother that her family has ancient roots. In the context of the story, this claim is unfolded in its social and political aspects. Guillaume, as a member of a class of chivalry that considers itself to be ancient, receives the honour he feels is his due despite the major-domo, who represents a new political bureaucracy of lowly extraction. Guillaume's and his family's claim to class is finally gratified through Lienor's marriage to Conrad. Emperor and poor knight belong henceforth to the same family.

Thus, the author, it seems, promotes the chanson d'histoire not just as a superchérie littéraire;[29] he implicitly gives an interpretation of the genre, integrating it into a social and political context. The songs need not be much older than the romance itself. but they are connected specifically with the taste of the people of the plessis, who look to the past and who share their historical perspective, it seems with Jean Renart's reading public. It is the manner in which the songs are introduced into the romance and in the overall panorama of the lyrical inlays that the author declares himself to the public. The task of introducing the morally suspect songs is given to the mother, a lady whose craftsmanship and subtlety is exemplified in her fine embroidery. The picture of the mother at her work reminds the reader of the author's prologue, where the technique of inserting lyrics into the narrative is compared with the fine art of embroidery:

> car aussi com l'en met la graine
> es dras por avoir los et pris,
> einsi a il chans et sons mis
> en cestui Romans de la Rose,
> qui est une novele chose
> et s'est des autres si divers
> et brodez par lieus de biaus vers
> que vilains nel porroit savoir.
> (8-15)

While many kinds of songs are inserted into the romance, the chanson d'histoire is the most obviously connected with the art of embroidery both in the literal and the metaphoric sense. The tradition and origin of the genre are obscure, but the author tries to equate it to those songs which may be easily traced to the past and where there is an obvious ethical connection with established courtly fasion. The rose, which designates the authentic title of the romance, summarizes as an emblem both the nature of the _chanson d'histoire_ and the political aspirations of its social milieu: its beauty and prestige are to be known only to a lover or to the initiated; otherwise, it can cause shame to its bearer. Both the _chanson d'histoire_ and the characters linked to it in the romance are to be understood in connection with an ideal past, but the nature of that connection, like the rose on Lienor's thigh, is not for the common eye to scrutinize.

We will leave the _chanson d'histoire_ now. Nearly all the other songs in the romance can be placed much more easily in literary history. Belonging to the world of Conrad, most of them belong to two genres, the _caroles_ or dancing song and the well-known _chanson d'amour_. Before studying them in greater detail it should be remarked that they occupy different places in the narrative, the _carole_ usually being sung at a time of communal rejoicing, and the _chanson_ expressing or commenting on the emperor's love sufferings.

The _carole_, as the first genre appearing in the romance, helps to set the general tone of Conrad's social ambiance; it underlines that picture of social harmony which later becomes the object of Guillaume's and Lienor's quest. Returning now to the _carole_ "C'est la jus," I will examine it within the context of the romance.

VI: The Carole and Dancing

I have not yet discussed the activity of Robin and Mariete in the poem. Only the verb "enmaine"--"(he) leads (her) by the hand"--gives a rough indication of what it might be. After having examined "A l'entrade," one might expect from a poem with this kind of circular structure that it accompany a dance or invite to dance. Historical evidence contained in the legend of the "Dancers of Kölbigk:"[30] would strengthen this assumption. I have chosen "C'est la jus" in order to examine such an hypothesis. It is the only poem in Guillaume de Dôle with a set of characters comparable in certain ways to those in "A l'entrade" and to the song reported in the legend of the "Dancers of Kölbigk:"

> Equitabat Bovo per silvam frondosam,
> Ducebit secum Mersuinden formosam.
> Quid stamus? Cur non imus?[31]

As the legend reports, the song encouraged the dancers to keep on dancing. More specifically, what Bovo and Mersuind were doing encouraged the people to dance. Not that the pair were dancing--"equitabat" and "ducebit secum" would rather indicate an elopement--but it is to be inferred that the dance shares with Bovo's and Mersuind's activity a certain unbinding of latent emotions. The song is functionally limited to the accompanying and sustaining of a dance, and as such remains at a preliterary stage. The scene which is depicted does not stand in its own right; rather it is supposed to direct the imagination of the singers towards an aim which, although reflected in the song, has its own and independent reality. In "A l'entrade" the example of the queen and her dancers, unlike that of Bovo and Mersuind, leads back into an intensified appreciation of the poem: whether or not the Provençal song had any real choreographic purpose, the dance it depicts is a poetic principle effective on several levels of expression. The notion of the dance here assumes richer symbolical connotations.

Let us assume that Robin and Mariete are also dancing: what stimulating effect could their activity have? Unlike Bovo and Mersuind, Robin and Mariete do not directly invite an imitation of what they are doing; rather the scene offers itself as a picture of harmonious motion in an atmosphere of suspended causality. "C'est la jus" is a singularly pure realisation of the *locus amoenus*. As such, it reflects the carefree milieu in which it is recited, a society where the benevolent smile of an almighty sovereign shines over a life in which everything has its place.

In two ways, as I have already stated, "C'est la jus" is an exceptional poem. Robin and Mariete offer an apparent similarity to Bovo and Mersuind and to the queen and her dancers in "A l'entrade." But the *locus amoenus*, to be perfect, must be complete in itself, and so the song could not have an exhortative function. Some of the other *caroles* in the romance are less subtle and more outspoken.

Statements like "einsi doit aler qui aime" (296), "Puceles, carolez!" (2372), "Mignotement alez! (2524), look as unsubtle as the "Quid stamus? Cur non imus?" of the Kölbigk dance. But here an inquiry into the meaning of caroler and karole in Guillaume de Dôle helps to draw a distinction. Contrary to the meaning of danser and danse in the glossary of Félix Lecoy's edition, none of the passages in which the word occurs implies that we are dealing with a dance. In the first place a karole is a song:

> ainz i sont si granz les karoles
> c'on les oit de par tot le borc.
>
> (2364-65)

The context of the above passage associates the carole with the "drinking and raging" (2362) of knights who are spending a few days in a borc for a tournament. Not that this is necessarily a typical carole situation: when the term occurs within a lyric of the genre, the circumstances are usually those of a green meadow with groups of festively dressed young people. But, obviously, the translation of carole and caroler cannot be limited too narrowly. Usually portrayed in a beautiful outdoor setting, the only specific information about the performance of caroles in Guillaume de Dôle is that the singers go in pairs, hand in hand:

> Main a main, em pur lor biau cors,
> devant le tref, en un pré vert,
> les puceles et li vallet
> ront la carole commenciee.
>
> (507-10)

They need not, however, go in a circle, let alone dance, as the following description of carole singing proves:

> Si chantant en itel meniere
> resont tuit revenu arriere
> trusqu'as trez ou il ot bel estre (334-36)

Exhortations like "Pucceles, carolez!" refer, therefore, at least in the context of Guillaume de Dôle, not to dancing, but to communal singing. It goes without saying that any group can dance to the tune of a carole; the main characteristic of the genre lies in its poetic dimensions, mostly in the diagrammatic appearance of the round dance principle in its structure.

VII: Spontaneity and The Performance of the Carole

Linked to the mode of performance of the carole is the question as to whether the poems as they are recorded in the manuscript of Guillaume de Dôle are complete versions, or whether a continuation of the poems, left out for a particular reason by either the author or the copyist, should be assumed. There is evidence for both alternatives. The structural evidence we obtained in our discussion of "C'est la jus" would speak for a poem with a single stanza. A continuation of a song which is as self-mirrored as this one hardly seems possible. For a poem so near to the classical form of the rondeau, this structural evidence is strengthened by the later evolution of the form. The narrative context, however, would here support exactly the opposite view: how can we understand the statement, "C'este n'ot pas duré .III. tours" (528), if not as a hint that the reported text of "C'est la jus" was followed by two more stanzas of the same structure and melody? And how is the song continued--by the same singer, by another person, by everyone, or by a kind of responsorium between a leader and the crowd?[32]

We cannot hope to solve conclusively these questions about the performance of the songs, but a rough generic explanation can be obtained if we look at the poems and their overall narrative context. The caroles in Guillaume de Dôle, as is well known, are claimed to be the primitive ancestors, not only of the classical rondeau, a one stanza poem, but also of such poems with several stanzas as virelai and ballade.[33] We have seen that "C'est la jus" is an exceptionally "round poem" and cannot, without further explanation, be declared as a model for all other caroles. The fact which I have just discussed that the audience is addressed seriously disturbs the self-contained nature of some of the poems, while others, like the songs about bele Aelis, can hardly be imagined without an elaboration of the narrative nucleus contained in the first stanza, and in this case we possess versions with several stanzas, in which this elaboration takes place. If we look at the poem "Mauberjou s' est main levee" (2379), structurally not very different from "C'est la jûs," it becomes clear that with some very slight formal changes a carole may appear to be a primitive, and fragmentary, form of a virelai, rather than as an integral prototype of a rondeau. The caroles in Guillaume de Dôle are obviously of somewhat diverse characteristics, despite the common use of certain formal expressions and despite a similar structure. Although the Guillaume de Dôle manuscript offers the earliest version of the caroles, it is likely that the genre had already been widely practised and had become a general basis for poetic experimentation. The multi-stanza form of some songs in Guillaume de Dôle, although only attested in more recent manuscripts, often seems to be the only coherent and logical form, so that we may indeed suppose that the romance presents only fragments in some cases.

But not necessarily every time. It would seem that the narrator considers that a poem such as "C'est la jus" is continued by two stanzas of parallel structure. But right at the beginning of the scene in which the caroles are first sung, he also gives us a hint of how such continuations are to be understood. The very first song, on this occasion, is the only one where a continuation is actually given. It is, strictly speaking, a couplet, and thus different from the usual carole, but I will examine it briefly in order to demonstrate the author's conception of the textual unity of a song. As is appropriate for the beginning of communal singing and rejoicing, the first "stanza" of the song is sung by a group, the cavaliers:

> E non Deu, sire, se ne l'ai
> l'amour de lui, mar l'acointai.
> (291-92)

Before they are finished, another song is begun which is in turn interrupted when a young girl again begins the song of the cavaliers:

> Ainz qu'ele fust bien commencie,
> une pucele secorcie
> d'un trop biau chainze, a un blont chief,
> en reconmence de rechief:
>
> Se mes amis m'a guerpie,
> par ce ne morrai ge mie.
> (300-05)

The two verses complement each other as playful expressions of male and female erotic aggression. Important to note is that both the cavaliers and the girl seem to be improvising, to suit the occasion, and that the girl, while using the same meter and form as the cavaliers (we know nothing about the music), is free to choose her own words. According to the words of the narrator--"en reconmence de rechief"--it is still the same song. Imagining such a two stanza continuation for "C'est la jus," we would expect the individual stanzas to be linked semantically through the wider circumstances of the performance, just as the two couplets cited above fit together logically as self-characterisations of the participating singers. In that case, however, these imaginary continuations of "C'est la jus" would be completely independent of the model and could be interpreted in isolation from it. Thus, the context of Guillaume de Dôle relegates the question of textual completeness of the poems to a level of secondary importance.

As Jean Renart's work is the oldest extant record of the carole, the author deserves fame much more as the first known promoter of the genre than as its collector. Being such a short poem, the carole is traditionally imbedded in the manuscript in a broader context, either as a collection of several poems of its kind, or within a narrative.[34] Especially in its formal aspect as rondeau, its uniqueness is underlined either through a generic grouping--which stresses the idea that the form is sanctioned by tradition--or by being inserted into an imaginary social background, as in Guillaume de Dôle. In the latter case, the insertion of poems of more than one genre allows for a more precise generic delimitation of the carole, by means of an implicit comparison with the other genres present. In Guillaume de Dôle, the carole is distinct from the other poems in that it is performed largely at relaxed and joyful moments, and in that its ideal creative mode is described as improvisation. The other genre first promoted by the author, the chanson d'histoire, seems to have been reproduced faithfully from memory, while in the case of the love chanson the authors of the poems are mentioned or other remarks are made which serve to introduce them as previously composed texts. These generic indications clarify at least one point about the performance of the *caroles*: recurrent formulas are not to be considered, at least in the context of *Guillaume de Dôle*, as parts sung by the whole crowd, as compared to other lines recited by a leader, but as the limited poetic stock by which the individual singers may more easily improvise their own songs.

As the songs first inserted in the text, the *caroles* set the general background by which the function of all the other songs in the narrative may be understood. I have already discussed the way in which the *chansons d'histoire* reflect certain crucial developments in the plot, so that part of their autonomy is ceded to the surrounding narrative, and a similar role is played by the *caroles*. The insertion of the *carole*, however, seems much easier than that of the *chanson d'histoire* due to their apparently improvised nature. What especially facilitates their insertion is that the springtime harmony, which is central to the content and which is a dominant generic feature, is congenial to the atmosphere described in those places of the narrative where they occur. At first, the *carole* functions mainly by accentuating the way of life at Conrad's court, a life in which love exists sheltered from any outside disturbance. Later, when the *carole* recurs, it brings a flair of the emperor's free society. But, the improvisation may also be developed so far that the carole is used to comment on a specific event, as when the major-domo is thrown into prison and a carole is sung, with the following refrain:

> Vos ne vendres mie caroler es prez,
> que vos n'amez mie.
>
> (5431-32)

In the euphoric moment when Conrad recognizes Lienor, a carole, without its usual structure and formulaic wording, fills a space in the narrative which might also have been occupied by the normal octosyllabic verse of Guillaume de Dôle:

> De la joie qui l'en rehete
> li est ciz chans dou cuer volez:
>
> Que demandez vos
> quant vos m'avez?
> que demandez vos
> dont ne m'avez vos?
> -Ge ne demant rien
> se vos m'mamez bien.
>
> (5104-11)

And all join in with the refrain:

> Tendez tuit vos mains a la flor d'esté,
> a la flor de liz,
> par Deu, tendez i!
>
> (5113-15)

The ideal happiness typical of the carole converges here with the first glimpse of a happy end. But in this decisive moment we are reminded of the utopian setting in which this all happens. The narrator says that the refrain just sung stands in lieu of a Te Deum laudamus, and thus leads our memory back into the scene where the happy guests of the emperor sing love songs instead of going to mass, and where the birds are their chaplains. The assumption made by this is that all these people were good enough as they were, and needed no help from the church. Because they are performed by people of an ideal era, with naturally flawless characters, the caroles are clearly placed in a primitivist context.

VIII: The Locus Amoenus and Conrad's Primitivist Society

To support this with more evidence, I will briefly outline the view of poetry which comes to the surface in the conversation between Conrad and his jongleur toward the beginning of the story, and I will then demonstrate how this primitivism dominates even the love chansons, the last major group of inserted songs which I will discuss.

On the return from a diplomatic mission, Conrad asks his jongleur Jouglet to alleviate his great boredom. He has been riding a long distance, the day becomes warmer towards nine o'clock, and he tells Jouglet that he is very sleepy:

> Fet li empereres: "J'ai hui,
> certes, eü mout grant someil.
> Aucun conte dont ge m'esveil
> me conte, fet il, biaus amis." (651-54)

Jouglet, in fact, is very lucky to live in Conrad's atavistic utopia. The emperor seems to humour gladly such vices of poets as orgoeil and melancolie (646) and does not keep his jongleur at a distance. They both leave the road, and Jouglet begins his tale, while the emperor lays his arm fraternally on his shoulder. A minister, a confessor or a mistress could not have commanded the emperor's attention more than does the jongleur. The tale he tells Conrad, supposedly a love story, does not advance beyond a description of the male protagonist, before the emperor halts it in order to express his delight:

> Fet li empereres: "Meshui"
> n'avrai ge talent de dormir!
>
> (675-76)

However, it is not the tale as such which attracts his interest so much as the figure of the protagonist. He sinks into a reverie in which he declares that if only Jouglet could find such a cavalier he would not even mind if he were to see his fortress and the town consumed by flames upon his return in the evening, but, instead, would grant the jongleur all his heart's desires (677-84). Joulet had anticipated the effect this story would have on Conrad, namely, that the poetic would be converted in his mind into the concretely real. This anticipation on the part of the jongleur is shown in his assertion at the start of the tale that it is all entirely true and "une mervelle" (657). Conrad's enthusiasm becomes even greater with Jouglet's description of the lady, ending with these words:

> Ce sachiez vos de verité
> qu'ele ert tel com ge la devis.
>
> (721-22)

Although the jongleur has related only a small fraction of the tale, he receives his payment,--a fur coat--presumably a very good one, since, under the circumstances, it can only have been the emperor's own. Again Conrad's imagination turns the poetic world into the real world, this time even more strongly, as the characters assume for him a latent reality. He muses that he would not mind being wounded, if he could only discover whether such a knight and such a lady lived in France. If they should, he swears that a messenger would be sent at once to bring the knight to his court. And for the lady of the story, the emperor conceives a sad nostalgia: knowing that there is no such lady living in his empire, he is resigned to die without ever having such an "amie" (723-38).

And, yet, it is striking to note that Jouglet's brief character sketches consist in nothing but superlative praise of the qualities of the person described. So far as the reader can judge, these characters only come to life in the stimulated mind of the emperor, and in his singularly naive mind word and fact seem to be indistinguishable from each other. Jouglet immediately gratifies the emperor's desire for the concrete by assuring him that he knows a cavalier who is even more gallant and a lady who is even prettier than those of his story.

The two excellent persons are Guillaume and his sister Lienor who, after Jouglet's introduction, are to become main figures in the romance. It is characteristic of Conrad that he feels the first spark of love for Lienor immediately upon hearing her name:

> Amors la cuit d'une estencele
> de cel biau non mout pres del cuer;
> or li seront, sachiez, d'un fuer
> totes les autres por cesti.
> "Beneoiz soit qui cest non basti
> et li prestres qui fu parrins!
> Il fust arcevesqes de Rains,
> se je fusse sires de France.
> (793-800)

Thanks to the good services of Jouglet, a messenger, Nicole, is then sent to the home of Guillaume and Lienor--and we know the rest. Thus, before the main plot of the romance has begun, the emperor has subtly been drawn into the centre of the action, from his role as spectator and patron, through the jongleur's able mixing of fiction and reality. Conrad is only prepared to accept this because he is a person of unreserved trust. For him, the sense and sound of words are inseparable from the reality they describe, and so he would suspect no lies in anything Jouglet tells him.

We are not entirely unprepared to see this aspect of Conrad's philosophy, for we have already seen signs of it in the introductory description of his court. Here we see a world in which doubt never enters: all of Conrad's retainers are faithful; good knights from all over are well received and treated with respect (outer appearances, we must assume, show unequivocally the character of a knight, and whether or not he deserves this treatment); persons of evil intentions, such as robbers and thieves, are readily distinguishable, and all receive the punishments or execution they deserve. In short, Conrad's realm is depicted in a singularly primitivist simplicity.

I have already discussed the equally primitivist bias which accompanies the performance of the caroles. The remarks already made can be broadened to cover Conrad's linguistic orientation. In the carole, form and content are adapted to each other; and so, too, in Conrad's mind, word and fact lie close together.

The roundness of the caroles is connected both with the feelings of harmony proper to them and with the seclusion of the locus amoenus, and these, in turn, determine the content of the songs. Even the performance of the caroles can be called circular, in that the singers, and the place where they usually sing, resemble, respectively, the characters and the setting of the songs sung. The pronouns je, vous and nous are directed specifically to the singer himself and to his companions around him.

As we have already seen, the poetic autonomy of the carole is not affected by its primitivistic setting, but the love chanson presents a very different case. All of these chansons are fragmentary, so that the stanzas which appear are removed from their original context. Since the chanson is usually a highly compact unit, such a procedure on the part of the author must seem barbaric to the lover of the genre. It is clear that the fragmentary nature of the chansons is not the result of bad copying, but rather that it constitutes the only possible means of working these songs into the narrative without distracting the reader from the essential development of the plot.

Among the longer poems, only one of the chansons d'histoire appears in its entirety. This is only possible due to the extensive analogies between the love intrigues of Guillaume de Dôle and the plots of the chansons d'histoire. The moral viewpoint of this genre largely determines the ethical background for Lienor's and Conrad's love story. It is thus inevitable that the love chanson finds the atmosphere of the narrative construed to its disadvantage. I have already shown that Lienor's social life and the songs which she and her mother love to sing are contrary to the spirit of troubadour love. It would seem that the sixteen fragmentary love chansons serve mainly to provide a close commentary on the emperor's love feelings, without showing much of that speculative depth which only their full text could reveal.

The tenor of the chansons changes in accordance with the main developments of the plot. On a number of occasions right at the onset of his love for Lienor, Conrad sings songs which express the desire for her that he is just beginning to feel (846-52; 923-30; 1456-69). When the narrative is focused on Guillaume's success at court, the emperor sings a love song (1769-76) which reminds the reader of the latent presence of a love plot rather than giving him any insight into Conrad's frame of mind. A similar reminder of the love story is a francized version of Jaufre Rudel's Lanquan li jorn (1301-07), which Guillaume and his companions sing on their way to the emperor, ostensibly motivated in their singing by the songs of the birds. As Conrad is near to informing Guillaume of his marriage plans, his choice of chanson becomes slightly different. He has Jouglet sing a song in which a winter landscape reflects the lover's failure to find an amie because of his insistence on a durable relationship (2027-35). This idea of unwavering love is again underlined in the piece which Conrad recites to Guillaume after he has disclosed to him his intention of marrying his sister (3107-14). Action is provoked by the two stanzas which Conrad composes himself under the eyes of the spying major-domo (3180-95). He tells of his insatiable desire for the loved one and defies "les faus diz de la gent," a challenge which he will be obliged to sustain, as the narrator tells us:

> Ces .II. vers li fist pechiez dire,
> qu'il en orent puis grant anui.
> (3196-97)

As soon as the major-domo has made his slanderous statement about Lienor, the *chansons* become progressively more sombre (3625-31; 3751-59; 3883-93; 4127-40). Of these, the last one seems to the emperor to have been made just for him:

> Fet li rois: "Juglet, a droiture
> fu ciz vers fet por moi sanz doute."
> (4141-41)

Here, when his pain is at its deepest, he believes that nobody could sing such a song as well as he.

At this point, Lienor begins to take the initiative in the situation they are in, and Conrad sings no more songs. But just as Lienor is about to appear before him, he hears a song before his chamber, in which the pains of love are given a faint glimpse of hope.

The last *chansons* are recited by Guillaume's company on its way to Lienor, the new empress, and they serve as a last reminder of the difficulties which had been encountered (5212-26; 5232-52). In all occasions to some extent, and most particularly at times of the emperor's distress, the love *chansons* are found against a simplistic background reminiscent of the troubadour *vida*.

As the love chanson is the most courtly of all the genres, it is obvious that Conrad as an individual and his society do not present us with an unadulterated picture of courtly life. Neither is the plot comparable to an Arthurian romance, for, unlike the works of Chrétien, the portion of the life cycle portrayed in Guillaume de Dôle ends with the marriage of the protagonists. Most of the problematic issues of courtly love are thereby avoided, and we can hardly say that this romance is an attempt to adapt on a full scale the Provençal love ethic to the more rigorous moral standards of the North.

This raises the question of the ideology expressed in the inserted caroles, and of their generic affiliation. They fit so smoothly into Guillaume de Dôle, that they must in some way express a modification of the basic ideas of courtly love. None of the statements in the caroles is as specifically uncourtly as those of the chansons d'histoire, however. The deviations from the courtly norms become apparent when we compare the caroles with their Provençal counterparts, which were discussed in Chapter i. In their function as lyrical insertions, they are to be compared with the "Kalenda maia" in the romance of Flamenca, and this comparison at once brings into focus the one difference between them. Whereas the "Kalenda maia" accounts for a good deal of the suspense in the narrative and lays part of the moral basis for Flamenca's adulterous behaviour, the caroles at the beginning of Guillaume de Dôle impregnate the narrative with so much harmony that no impetus for action comes out of the introductory picture of Conrad's world. The jongleur--and he certainly represents the author in this instance--has to feed some spectacular news to the slumbering emperor before anything happens.

In order to show that the "Kalenda maia" has not been purposefully manipulated in order to function as a motivating force in the plot of Flamenca, I will compare "A l'entrade," a similar dancing poem, with "C'est la jus."

Both the poems express the idea of a locus amoenus and both are round compositions insofar as they do not require any further introduction or continuation. But what "C'est la jus" lacks is the inherent ambiguity between poetic autonomy and a latent programmatic statement such as I have noted in my discussion of the Provençal song. In the carole, the deictic expressions "C'est la jus" and "E mon Deu!" do not specify the subject of the esthetic impulse, and thereby they imply that the enjoyment of the scene is a universal one. The universal pleasure which is assumed in the song has the effect of extracting the scene from the outside world. The structure of "A l'entrade," on the other hand, carefully establishes a logical connecttion with the outside world by mixing narrative, exclamation and the interaction of the characters. This is partly possible because "A l'entrade" is longer than the carole, in which verbs can only form the nucleus of a narrative or dialogue. The minuteness of the carole, however, is not itself a reason for the thematic difference, since its very shortness may well be motivated by the wish to create a radically isolated scene. Before we can establish what is missing in the French song, we must first discover the thematic borderline in the Provençal song between the pastoral and alien surroundings. As we have found, the idea of the hostile, outside world is concentrated in the person of the jealous king, and since the jaloux is such an essential character in courtly poetry, it is useful to ask whether he plays some role in the present selection of caroles or in their context.

Only one of the songs, one of the Aaliz group, mentions the jaloux at all:

> Main se leva bele Aeliz,
> dormez, jalous, ge vos en pri,
> biau se para, miex se vesti
> desoz le raim
> Mignotement la voi venir,
> cele que j'aim!
>
> (310-15)

As far as the logic of the song is concerned, the second line is only loosely connected to the rest of the poem. Somone asks the jaloux to sleep, but there is nothing to tell us if the *ge* of line *2* refers to the same subject as in the last line. *J'aim*, I love, could be imagined as said by a man, whereas the apostrophe of the *jaloux* would suggest a female voice. The illogical nature of this structure would make it clear that the *jaloux* has none of that central importance characteristic of the king in "A l'entrade." Since it is specified that the song is recited by a "dame sanz vilonte" (307), we may assume that invective against the jealous man does not find the unconditional approval of Jean Renart's reading public.

This would account for the conspicuous absence of the *jaloux* in the other *caroles*, an absence which in any event is carefully explained by the narrative. If any *jaloux* were present during the singing, it would have to be shown in the spontaneous mode of the *carole*; but all the *jaloux* and *envieus* have been sent off into the wood to hunt well before any of the celebrations begin. What we found to be the most central element in "A l'entrade" has thereby been relegated here to the narrative margin.

Instead of the classical balance between euphoria and invective found in "A l'entrade," the *caroles* in *Guillaume de Dôle* present to us a pastoral world without any connection to the more displeasing facts of life. It is not clear to what extent Jean Renart has given us a biased selection of poems, since we do not possess any contemporary or earlier texts for comparison. But later *caroles*, in which the invective against the jealous husband is of central importance, would certainly not belong in *Guillaume de Dôle*, because they totally lack a pastoral note. Known as *chansons de la mal-mariée*, they will be discussed in the following chapter.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter Two

[1] See Erich Köhler, Ideal und Wirklichkeit, pp.142-143.

[2] Georges Millardet, Le Roman de Flamenca, p.10.

[3] On the distinction between the two heresies, see R. Nelli, L'Erotique des troubadours, Bibliothèque méridionale, 2, ser. 38 (Toulouse: Privat, 1963).

[4] The text of "La bele Aiglentine" is taken from Karl Bartsch, ed., Romances et pastourelles françaises, Part 1, No. 2. Whenever a discrepancy occurs, Bartsch gives the manuscript version in his notes; see Bartsch, "Anmerkungen," Ibid., p.338.

[5] The text of "C'est la jus" is taken from Bartsch, Romances et pastourelles, Part 2, No. 116.

[6] The text of the romance is taken from Jean Renart, Le Roman de la Rose ou de Guillaume de Dôle, ed. Félix Lecoy (Paris: Champion, 1963). On the problem of authorship, the date of composition, and other works supposedly written by the same author, see Lecoy, pp.iii-vii. Lecoy proposes 1228 as the date of composition.

[7] For an account of the history and versions of this tale, see Gaston Paris, "Le cycle de la gageure," Romania, 32 (1903), 481-551.

[8] Lecoy, pp.xix ff.

[9] Lecoy, p.xix: "Et il est bien vrai que notre auteur n'est pas un auteur facile. On sera tout de suite frappé, en particulier, par sa démarche heurtée et abrupte, les sautes d'idées brutales, les ruptures de continuité. Notre poète dit d'entrée de jeu sans préparation ce qu'il tient à dire; il passe, sans transition, d'un développement à un autre, change de sujet (même grammatical) sans prévenir, bouleverse sans scrupule l'ordre normal des termes dans la phrase, courant droit au but et s'attachant au trait qui lui paraît essentiel. Il expédie, au contraire, rapidement ce qu'on pourrait appeler le 'tout venant' de la narration et laisse même souvent à son lecteur le soin de suppléer ce qu'il n'a pas jugé utile de dire."

[10] My interpretation of the plot differs here from those proposed in Lecoy, p.xii, and Gaston Paris, "Le

[10] cycle de la gageure," p.488, no. 2. Elaborating on Gaston Paris' remark that the role of the mother is "des plus malheureux," Lecoy writes:

> "Aussi Jean Renart a-t-il été obligé de confier le rôle de confidente indiscrète--et spontanée--à la mère de la jeune fille--et là, il faut bien dire qu'il a été moins bien inspiré. A moins de supposer, en effet, cette mère particulièrement stupide, on ne voit pas trop ce qui peut l'amener à confier à un inconnu un détail secret, en lui-même sans interêt, sauf naturellement pour celui qui a l'intention d'en utiliser la connaissance à la perte de l'héroîne."

Let us visualize the glamorous impression which the major-domo would make on a housebound widow and the suggestion of a costly gift as a sign of his drüerie, a term which has strongly sensual overtones. Admittedly, the widow seems to lack an even basic suspicion, but a certain response to the major-domo's erotic overture is only to be expected. The mother describes Lienor's anatomy in what can be seen as a sublimated statement of the mother's own sensuality.

[11] Here again, my interpretation differs from that of Lecoy, pp.ix-x:

> "Là, sans révéler son non, bien entendu, et après avoir mis en oeuvre une ruse qui peut sembler faire un peu trop complaisamment appel à notre crédulité--et à la crédulité du sénéchal--elle réussit à convaincre la cour impériale qu'elle est une pauvre victime des agissements dudit sénéchal. . ."

The major-domo's mistake can easily be explained by his unusually high regard for matters of money.

[12] Lecoy, p.152 (table des noms).

[13] Compare a similarly wide distance in the invitations in stanza 2 of "A l'entrade:"

> Ele a fait per tot mandar--Eya
> Non sie jusq'a la mar--Eya
> Pucele ni bachelar--Eya
> Que tuit non venguent dancar
> En la danse joiouse.

[14] Lecoy, p.xvii:

> "Note poète nous laisse entendre
> qu'on est en droit aussi d'en espérer un
> peu plus que des joies platoniques et purement
> spirituelles."

[15] Lecoy, p. xviii.

[16] Lecoy, p.xviii.

[17] See Felix Schlösser, Andreas Capellanus: Seine Minnelehre und das christlich Weltbid un 1200, pp.118-119.

[18] Instead, a nephew, who has not been previously mentioned, takes a hasty journey to the plessis, where he intends to chastize Lienor. This figure would not be necessary at all, if not precisely for the reason that Guillaume's mobility has been greatly reduced by his obligations at court.

[19] Lecoy, p.xiv: "Par contre, tout le personnel secondaire, et en particulier les combattants qui prennent part au tournoi de Saint-Froud, porte des noms de la noblesse réelle de l'époque."

[20] This certainty of hers, insofar as it reflects a social claim, is a major generic trait of the fairy tale. See André Jolles, Einfache Formen: Legende, Sage, Mythe, Rätsel, Kasus, Memorabile, Märchen, Witz, rpt. 1929 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1958), p.239:

> "Wenn nun aber Personen und Begebenheiten des Märchens auch nicht den Eindruck des eigentlich Moralischen machen, so kann man doch nicht leugnen, dass sie eine Befriedigung gewähren--und diese Befriedigung beruht weniger darauf, dass hier unsere 'Neigung zum Wunderbaren,' zugleich mit unsrer 'Liebe zum Natürlichen und Wahren' befriedigt wird als darauf, dass es in diesen Erzählungen so zugeht, wie es unserem Empfinden mach in der Welt zugehen müsste."

[21] Karl Bartsch, Romances et pastourelles. See, for example, Part 1, No. 9; Part 2, Nos. 56,57, 58.

[22] Raymond Joly, "Les chansons d'histoire," Romanistisches Jahrbuch, 12 (1961), 53-55.

[23] Ibid., p.53

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid., p.54.

[26] Ibid., pp.53-54.

[27] Bartsch, Romances et pastourelles, Part 1, No. 15.

[28] Edmond Faral, "Les chansons d'histoire ou chansons de toile," Romania, 69 (1946-1947), 433-462.

[29] Faral, p.462.

[30] See Gaston Paris, "Les danseurs maudits," Journal des Savants, 64 (1899), 733-747.

[31] Ibid., p.744.

[32] For the responsorium theory, see Bédier, "Les plus anciennes danses françaises."

[33] Walter Suchier, Französische Verslehre auf historischer Grundlage, pp.205-207.

[34] Nico H.J. van den Boogard, Rondeaux et refrains du XII^{e} siècle au début de XIV^{e} (Paris: Klincksieck, 1969).

CHAPTER THREE

A Fusion of Forms: the _Mal-mariée_

In "La bele Aiglentine" and "C'est la jus" we traced the development of the troubadour love ethic and the Provençal love lyric. We saw in them the disruption of formal and ethical principles which were united in the Provençal poetry examined. In this chapter, I will study two Old French poems of the _mal-mariée_ type, "Soufres, maris" and "En une praële."

A glance at Nico van den Boogard's edition of rondeaux shows that after _Guillaume de Dôle_, the mood of these poems is radically changed. Thematically, many of them contain ideas familiar to us from the courtly love _chansons_. Only occasionally in other _rondeaux_ collections can we find the _locus amoenus_ familiar from _Guillaume de Dôle_. Where it occurs, it is nearly always expressed in the older _carole_ style. Thus, among the poems of the more advanced eight-line form, it is principally the _mal-mariée_ songs which are linked thematically with the repertoire of the older dancing songs. Formally, they continue in the tradition of the _chansons à personnages_. Like the majority of the _caroles_ in _Guillaume de Dôle_, they contain characters, and narrative and dramatic development are at least latent in these songs.

The differences between these mal-mariée songs which I will be discussing and the earlier caroles are, of course, obvious, and need not occupy our attention here. The similarities, however, are important enough to be worthy of study. In keeping with the approach begun in Chapters i and ii, I will examine the examples chosen for review in considerable detail. I will compare one mal-mariée song, "Soufres, maris," with "Cest la jus." Since the pastoral setting and the dramatic function of the jaloux are the two constituent elements of the Provencal chanson dramatique, "A l'entrade" serves for the purpose of comparison. In the Old French poems, the initial absence and later appearance of the jaloux is a phenomenon that parallels the intrusion of the mal-mariée theme into the second generation of chansons d'histoire. In order to point out the similarities and differences between these two generations I will return briefly to Guillaume de Dôle. Finally, "En une präele" is an example of Old French poetic creativity, in which a pastoral setting, the mal-mariée theme, and characteristics of the chanson d'histoire are harmoniously united.

Let us consider first "Soufres, maris:"[2]

> 'Soufres, maris, et si ne vos anuit,
> demain m'ares et mes amis anuit.
> je vous deffenc k'un seul mot n'en parles:
> soufres, maris, et si ne vous mouves.
>
> La nuis est courte, a par mains me rares,
> qant mes amis ara fait sen deduit.
> soufres, maris, et si ne vous anuit:
> demain m'ares et mes amis anuit.'

The rhythmical structure of the poem is fairly straightforward, its metrical unit being decasyllabic verse, with pronounced masculine caesuras in all but the fifth line. The caesura in the middle of line 5 conforms to the epic pattern in that it is preceded by an unstressed _e_ after the fourth syllable. The semantic complexity of the poem is based on its sophisticated rhyme scheme. Bartsch has printed the poem in two stanzas, and this division is justified by the fact that the poem consists of two principal movements chiastically complementary to each other: as in "C'est la jus," however, the dividing line can be drawn in more than one way. Unlike "C'est la jus," this poem has no centre. Thus, a division between the repeated and the unrepeated lines--that is, lines 1 and 2 together, then lines 3-6, and finally lines 7 and 8--would reflect the structure of the poem more than would a simple division into stanzas. The poem can be understood as a dancing song because the movements of its characters are readily visualized in choreographic terms.

As in "C'est la jus," the theme is stated in the first two lines:

> Soufres, maris, et si ne vos anuit,
> demain m'ares et mes amis anuit.

The wife's request that her husband let her spend the coming night with her lover and return to him in the morning is as forthright as it is impudent. The verb soufrir at that time expressed both the idea of permission and, to a lesser degree, the notion of personal suffering, and it indicates that the husband's rights are being infringed upon in such a way as to touch him personally. The same two lines conclude the poem, too, making it a "round song," a rondeau. But we look in vain for axial symmetry of the kind so splendidly constructed in "C'est la jus." I contend that this difference in form is linked to an essential difference in content. In my discussion of "C'est la jus," I noted that axial imagery helped to integrate binary opposition; movement was coupled with stillness, and Robin and Mariete were made akin to the natural scene in order to justify their epigrammatic appearance. In "Soufres, maris," there is also a suggestion of a dichotomy between movement and the static, and as in "C'est la jus" the characters are as much phases in the poetic movement as they are protagonists in a particular scene. But some differences can be found. The first difference is in the setting; "Soufres, maris" does not have the nature framework of "C'est la jus," nor the spring-time motivation which results from it. The second difference is in the characters. Mariete is a figure of repose; she encorporates peace and beauty and she is the recipient rather than the initiator of the action. In "Soufres, maris," the corresponding figure would seem at first to be the husband, but he is static as well as anonymous, pitiable rather than beautiful, and stagnant rather than in repose or in receipt of movement. The woman, on the other hand, is not at all comparable to Mariete; the movement originates in her, and she, like her husband, is anonymous. The third difference is in mood, which is one of harmony in "C'est la jus" and of discord in "Soufres, maris." In "C'est la jus" movement and stillness, though distinguishable one from the other, merge into one picture of suspended causality. In "Soufres, maris," the impetuosity of the woman and the static position of the man stand in unresolved contrast to each other. This clash is strongest in the two middle lines of the poem:

> Soufres, maris, et si ne vous mouves[3]
> La nuis est courte, a par mains me rares.

The phrase "et si ne vous mouves" expresses the immobility of the husband and the aggressiveness of the wife. Furthermore, the wife's attitude is condescending. She coaxes her husband as one might a child or a stubborn old man. This contrast between the harmony of the one poem and the discord of the other can best be illustrated by comparing the central points of the two poems. In "C'est la jus," the whole scene comes to a focal point at "i," the simple pronoun of place, around which the images revolve almost visually, while the centre of "Soufres, maris" consists of two lines in which the wife's desire is contrasted to the husband's helplessness.

Both poems are of the kind that accompany dances or rhythmical movement. But whereas "C'est la jus" is an almost perfect round dance, in "Soufres maris" the round movement is suggested only by the final repetition of the initial two-line refrain. The words of the poem suggest advance and retreat rather than circular movement. The first four lines are a movement toward the husband, or an advance. In these lines, the woman talks to her husband in terms of almost unsurmounted impudence and harshness. In the beginning of this section, in the first two lines, the movement is ambiguous, since it is not clear from the words whether it is soliloquy or direct conversation. In the third line this ambiguity is resolved, for the woman orders her husband to keep his remarks to himself. The fourth line is even more direct, for she tells him to stay where he is, probably so that he will not interfere with her pleasure. The almost identical form of the first and fourth lines (only the last word of each is different) expresses formally that the lines frame the first movement. Line 5 introduces a new argument and a new movement. The night is short, the wife says, and in the morning she will return to her husband; she, and the poem, move away from her husband; in the opposite direction from the first section. Line 4 is a confrontation between husband and wife; in the mock consolation of the wife to her husband in line 5 she seems to be moving away from him, on her way to her lover. In the sixth line, seeming consolation is distorted into cruel mockery, thereby expressing an increase in both physical and emotional distance between the two--"Qant mes amis ara fait sen deduit." In the refrain at the end, as at the beginning, there is no feeling of contact between the woman and her unseen partner.

What is most troubling in "Soufres, maris" is the woman's failure to provide a particular reason for her invective. If she is in love with another man, there is no reason why she should not be quiet about her affair and carry it on with some tactful ingenuity. Even if she has been married to her husband by her forced consent, her violent invective against him does not seem justified. For she does not seem to be objecting to the marriage situation itself, and, in fact, her nocturnal escapade with her lover is mainly possible because she enjoys the social position of a married woman. Her attack against him seems to be personal, but without strongly personal motivations.

Unquestionably, the wife is morally weak, and there is strong anti-feminine feeling implied in the poem--"women are that way." This anti-feminism is not even balanced by the melodramatic portrayal of a cruel husband or by some hints at the delights that await her from her lover. This sort of portrayal is typical of the chanson de la mal-mariée of northern France, which is primarily a burlesque portrayal of persons who in their violent and unexplained actions appear to be stock characters.

As this comparison between "C'est la jus" and "Soufres, maris" should show, the Old French rondeau (in the narrow sense of chanson à personnages) develops from the extremely pure realization of the pastoral scene to the radically violent invective against the figure of the jealous husband. Both elements are present in "A l'entrade" and are harmoniously united in the Provençal love ethic as realized in Flamenca. In the Old French rondeaux they stand thematically apart, and the occurrence of one excludes the other or reduces it to a marginal importance.

Clearly the Old French chanson à personnages lacks something of the Provençal balance. Both in its pastoral and its mal-mariée versions it carries a certain amount of generic instability which is reflected in the tendency of the pastoral rondeau to live in the shelter of a narrative in which the nature of the pastoral setting is explained, and in the scarcity of "pure" mal-mariée songs of the kind just examined. The triangle between husband, wife and lover becomes absorbed into longer poems of the chanson d'histoire type. More significant than this incorporation as such is the fact that the hateful man in the chansons d'histoire is a particularly despicable individual, who is held responsible personally for the oppressive effects of marriage. It is not marriage as such, as it is in *Flamenca*, which is considered problematic. The violence directed against the husband is not carefully escalated, as in "A l'entrade," or motivated through a particular clash, as in the "Kalenda maia" insert in *Flamenca*, but its existence is an *a priori* fact in the Old French compositions, a violence directed against the permanent role or specific qualities of a particular husband.

It is then understandable that in the Old French handling of the *mal-mariée* theme the events prior to the conflict as such are often expanded. A new context for the woman's actions, unthinkable in the Provençal poems, is found in her accusations that she was given to her husband by her parents, the implication being that this was done without her approval, or even against her will.[4] With the addition of a remark concerning the social inferiority of the husband, this theme is in its basic form not much different from that employed later by Molière.[5]

During the Old French period, the expanded version of the *mal-mariée* song, realized as *chanson d'histoire*, is further expanded in the "romances" of Audefoi le Bâtard, of which some are as long as 173 verses.[6]

Thus, both the *chanson d'histoire* and the *chanson à personnages* differ in content from the general courtly pattern. As well, the *chanson d'histoire* is at variance with the picture of women in the earlier, epic stage of Old French poetry, while the chanson à personnages has possible connections with more outspokenly courtly Provençal versions. Poetically, the two forms may be seen as fused in the second generation of chansons d'histoire. This fusion would suggest that they are essentially of the same matter, and it raises the question as to whether the chanson d'histoire may not, like the carole, be considered as the product of a courtly tradition.

A specifically literary affiliation of these poems with the Provençal models is not apparent at first glance, as it is with the caroles. The position of the early chanson d'histoire in literary history is more like that of early Middle High German love lyrics of the so-called "pre-courtly" stage. The young girl's role as wooer goes against the pattern of woman worship in the canso. But the chanson d'histoire fits well into the general idea of the alliance "courtoise de l'amour et de la chevalerie" proposed by Jean Frappier as the keynote of a courtly culture in the French-speaking aristocracy of northern France and Britain, created without any tangible Provençal influence--at any rate before the date of the older extant troubadour songs.[7] A social milieu that gave rise to an autonomous corpus of courtly narrative poetry could well have been the origin of a lyrical production that did not bear a Provençal stamp.

This hypothesis will help explain to some extent the nature of the pieces that we now possess. Although the earliest transmitted poems are no earlier than the beginning of the thirteenth century, they can well be seen in connection with a typically northern French idea of courtly love. The idea that they originate in the beginning of northern courtliness, that is, in the first half of the twelfth century or earlier, would be hard to defend, since no texts that bear any resemblance to _chansons d'histoire_ have come to us from that period. On the other hand, a specifically northern taste has survived even after the manifest impact of Provençal poetry. In Chrétien's works, for example, a basic respect for marriage counterbalances the fashion of adultery. In _Erec_, supposedly the earliest of Chrétien's extant productions, the adulterous triangle never appears. The female protagonist is a young girl, who receives courtly honours through her marriage with Erec and, even more so, as a result of her most altruistic co-operation with her husband. There are some connections between the female characters of Chrétien and the type of girl in the _chanson d'histoire_. In _Cligès_, Fénice shows some strength of character, and Enide, while subordinate to her husband, takes decisive responsibility for their common welfare. But there remains a big difference between her and the young pregnant girl who goes to seek marriage with the father of her unborn child. The insolence of the heroines of the *chansons d'histoire* cannot be explained through parallels with any previous Old French examples, and certainly not with any Arthurian ones.

Guillaume de Dôle contains the earliest known *chansons d'histoire* and it offers enough that is reminiscent of Arthurian romance to give us some insight into the change of taste which occurred over a period of roughly half a century since the time of Chrétien's literary activity. The change in sensibility is the more noteworthy as the romance appears to cater to the same social group as do Chrétien's romances. It is characteristic of both that they defend the old class of chivalry against a newly emerged group of state officials of low extraction, and in the portrait of a king as peer.
In one major aspect *Guillaume de Dôle* is independent of any Arthurian model. Chrétien tries to reconcile Christian morality and courtly maxims; in *Guillaume de Dôle*, nobility and innocence go together, the protagonists being only nominally Christian. Good or bad actions are understood as the consequence of noble or low extraction, respectively. Nature, instead of God, is the ethical guideline. Thus, *Guillaume de Dôle* is a departure from tradition in the idea of the co-operation between *chevalerie* and *clergie*.

Is this anti-clerical bias of *Guillaume de Dôle* a sign of Provençal influence? Some Provençal influence is to be expected, since for a century before the romance was written Provençal poetry was greatly admired in northern France. Furthermore, Chrétien's strenuous attempts to reconcile the courtly love concept with a rigorously applied Christian morality came only half a century earlier. However, if we compare the romance with Flamenca, we see that it fails to demonstrate an understanding of the Provençal love ethic. It could be either that Jean Renart was himself acquainted with only a popularized view of amour courtois, already adapted to a northern context, or else that he personally construed a love intrigue especially suited to his northern reading public.

Whichever the case may be, his position becomes clear through his treatment of the lyrical inlays. The question becomes not one of lyrical influence or its lack, but of poetic originality and experimentation, and of the adaptability of certain lyric forms to the social milieu of northern France. In the case of all the forms, Provençal influence is either very clear or at least probable. In the case of the carole or the chanson d'histoire, no specific verifiable tradition is mentioned, and that leads us to assume that both forms were just beginning to surface in the literary world, if Jean Renart was not altogether the first initiator of the trend. But even if they had been created independently before the time of Provençal influence and had lived only as an oral genre in the north, it is likely that the broad cultural influence of the south, which shines through _Guillaume de Dôle_, would have affected them in some way. But of more importance than their ultimate origin is the fact that they initiate a period of lyrical originality in northern France after a period dominated by _canso_ imitations. They were considered important enough, at the time, to be copied and preserved. The mood and function of the love _chanson_ in the romance are quite different. Included with these poems are a few Provençal pieces recorded in a mixture of French and Provençal, by which means Jean Renart preserves the fact of the southern affiliation of the genre.

The _carole_, as I have demonstrated, is in many ways analogous to the few Provençal dancing songs, and can even be better understood against the more poetically logical Provençal background. The _chanson d'histoire_, although ideologically different from the southern love ethic, is not without formal analogies to a poem like "A l'entrade." Like that dancing song, all _chansons d'histoire_ are composed of a small scene with a short dramatic development between a few characters. Like it, they consist of a few short stanzas ended by a refrain, which give them their lyrical quality. In sum, the _chansons d'histoire_ are like "A l'entrade" in some points where the _caroles_ differ from both.

Whereas the _chanson d'histoire_ lacks harmony, the carole does not offer any rapid movement of action. Even caroles made up of several stanzas, like those songs about bele Aaliz, are notable for their slow change of argument or image. However uncertain the Provençal influence in the chanson d'histoire may be, it so happens that this group of songs and the caroles, when they appear for the first time in literature, realize complementary aspects of the Provençal dancing song as exemplified by "A l'entrade."

If in Guillaume de Dôle the caroles seem to be more easily congruent with a specifically courtly society than the other genres, it is due primarily to the lack of an ideological colour, as a result of which they can hardly be seen in conflict with any ideology or taste. Their form has, with some modifications, the same pronounced circular structure as the Provençal dancing song. It is a different matter with the chansons d'histoire, where the versification and treatment of the female figure link them at first glance with the "pre-courtly" world of the chanson de geste. I have already shown that their ideology differs in fact from this older stage in French poetry. But even in their form they do not present a perfect analogy to the chanson de geste. The scene of Aude dying before Charlemagne, if taken out of its context, would not be a chanson d'histoire. Among the narrative forms of medieval poetry, only the Provençal dancing song could have served as a pattern for the scenic isolation of the *chanson d'histoire*. The *chanson d'histoire* first borrowed the form of the dancing song incompletely, and in the earliest poems only the refrain underlines the fact that the poem lingers in a single confined scene.

A formal weakness characterizes the other adaptations of the Provençal dancing song as well. The harmoniously pastoral *rondeau de carole* in *Guillaume de Dôle* and the violent *mal-mariée* rondeau are confined to a few later *rondeau* collections. The fusion of the *mal-mariée* theme with the form of the *chanson d'histoire*, by going back to a common basis, represents a step toward the generic consolidation of the form and theme. But even in this fusion, the *mal-mariée* theme contains too much violence not to appear as a polemic with a specific social target rather than as poetry with an autonomous meaning. A more extensive consolidation takes place by the addition of the pastoral element, especially when it brings with it as compact a structure of rhythm as in "A l'entrade."

"En une präele" is one of the few poems in which all the component elements of "A l'entrade" are united. Even the rhythmical contours of dance appear in the text; and since the song comes so close to Provençal form, the crucial difference between Provençal and French ideology will become very obvious.

The following text of "En une präele" was transcribed by Spanke who, by the way, is the only editor of the poem who supplies the melody:[9]

I.

En une präele
M' entrai l'autrier,
Trouvai pastorele
Lez son bergier.
Li bergiers la bele
Vouloit besier,
Mes en fesoit ele
Mult grant dangier.
Car de cuer ne l'amoit mie,
Oncor fust ce sa plevie;
S'avoit ele ami
Autre que son mari,
Car son mari ne sai por quoi
Het ele tant que s'escrïoit:
"Ostez moi l'anelet dou doit,
Ne sui pas mariee a droit."

II.

"A droit, non," fait ele,
"Sire bergier,
En pur sa gonele
Eüsse plus chier
Celui qui frestele
En cel vergier
Sus la fontenele
Lex le rochier,
Que de vos la seignorie
D'Anjou ne de Normendie.
Or i ai failli,
Certes, ce poise mi."
Dist la douce criature
A haute vois:
"Honis soit maris qui dure
Plus d'un mois!"

III.

"D'un mois! suer doucete,"
Dist li pastors,
"Ceste chançonete
Mi fet iros.
Trop estes straingete
Vers moi toz jors,
Mult estes durete
Por vos amors:
Mais se vos avés la bee
Qu'a moi soiez acordee,
Si häez Garnier
Qui est en cel vergier."
Et ele dist que ja por li
Nel laira a amer:
Saderali dore, s'amor
Ne mi lesse durer."

IV.

"Durer, Jöanete,"
Dist li jalos,
"Fole ennuieusete,
Qui amez vos?'"
Dist la bergerete:
"Biau sire, vos!"
"Tu mens voir, garcete,
Ainz as aillors
Mis ton cuer et ta pensee,
Moi n'aimes tu, de riens nee,
Plus aimes Garnier
Qui est en cel vergier,
Que tu ne fais moi ne toi:
Maintes gens le me dient."
"Aimi, aimi, aimi, deus,
Amoretes m'ocient!"

V.

"Ocient, bergiere,
Non font, par foi!"
"Si font, biaus douz sire,
Foi que vos doi.
Il ont träisons
Dites de moi."
"Tu mans, garselete,
Je ne te croi;
Que tu es trop janglerece
Et trop fole vanteresse."
Il la vait ferir
Si qu'il la fist chëir.

Cele au redrecier vit ses dras honis,
Vint au bergier, si s'escrie:
"Ne me batés pas, dolereus maris,
Vos ne m'avés pas norrie."

VI.

"Norrie, bergiere,
N'ai je pas toi,
Mais tu as ta foit
Mentit vers moi."
Garnier qui frestelle
En öit l'esfroi,
Si vint au bergier
A grant desroi;
De son frestel lez l'öie
Li a doné tel congnie,
K'il l'en fist verser
Et en haut s'escrïer;
Par la main la bele a prise,
Ceste chançon va notant:
"J'en moins par les dois m'amie,
S'en vois plus mignotement!"

The structure of the poem is similar in principle to that of the rondeau which has been discussed. It consists of an introduction which presents the scene or the problem, a middle section that singles out one particular but vital aspect of that scene or problem, and a climactic end. The most important difference from the rondeau form is that the action is not condensed in one stanza but spread out over several, in this case six stanzas. Unlike most other chansons de la mal-mariée, the husband, in the present poem, has an opportunity of speaking for himself. He answers the insults of his wife with bitter words and finally hits her so hard that she falls into the dirt. This violent climax breaks the terrible invective between the spouses and prepares for the retaliation of the wife's lover, who in his turn throws the husband to the ground and walks off joyously with the woman as if nothing had happened. In spite of the crude way in which the characters act, the poem is not merely a cheap farce. The insults and the beating do not come as events striking out from the repertoire of idle chance or the hidden malice of a player of tricks. The events are latent from the beginning, and the confrontation very open. The penultimate climax and final calm build up gradually in the poem, as is clearly shown through the sequence and length of the parts spoken by the characters. Stanza 1, except for the two last lines, spoken by the woman, belongs to the narrator, stanza 2 to the woman, with only the words "fet ele" (2, 1.1) and the two lines 13 and 14 being spoken by the narrator.

The confrontation between them becomes more immediate in stanza 4, since they both speak, the husband in lines 1, 3-4, and 7-14, and the wife in lines 6, and 15-16. But up to the middle of this stanza all the spoken lines are reported by the narrator (lines 2 and 5); in line 7 this changes, when the husband answers the wife directly, and fast interchange between husband (stanza 5, lines 1-2, 7-10) and wife (stanza 5, lines 3-6), continue up to the beating incident, which is reported by the narrator (lines 11-13 of the same stanza), who also introduces the wife's complaint (line 14), the last two lines of the stanza.

This is followed immediately by the husband's reply (stanza 6, lines 1-4), followed in turn by the words of the narrator (lines 5-14) and the final happy song of the lover (lines 15-16).

The poem is exceptional in many ways and does not easily fit into any generic category. In none of the manuscripts does a title or author appear, either of which would help us to know what to expect. The opening lines:

> En une präele
> M'entrai l'autrier

are indicative of a genre, the *pastourelle*, but the expectations created by this beginning are deceived by the rest in which none of the stereotype *pastourelle* situations is deployed. The more remarkable is the speed with which narrative introduction, dialogue and action follow each other, since the public is drawn into a poetic event with such unusual developments.

Unity of time and place is strictly kept. Even the presence of Garnier, the lover, is hinted at early in the text, unlike the lovers in some of Audefoi's "romances" who suddenly appear from nowhere to save the poor suffering woman. The conflict between husband and wife is very simple; they are tied to each other by marriage, but do not love each other, reason enough for the young woman to refuse a kiss from her husband. The husband's attempt to kiss her is not only countered by her refusal, but by a verbal statement of her discontent, her desire not to be married to him any longer and her declaration that she prefers somebody else, Garnier, whose flute can be heard from the nearby orchard. The discontent with her husband and preference for her lover are depicted hyperbolically when she says that she would prefer Garnier in simple attire to her husband, even if he owned Anjou and Normandy. One can imagine, if one wishes, a background of mutual insult and cruelty, that would justify the wife's violent outburst. But the poet wants the essential action confined to his song, for, as if answering a question from the public, he says ". . . I know not why. . ." when he is reporting the wife's hatred. The uncertainty of the story's background, however, does not define it as anecdotal. When the wife at the end of her outburst exclaims: "Shame on a husband who lasts longer than a month," she is no longer referring to her husband in particular, but represents female discontent in general. From the vagueness of a pastoral scene we have been led into the heart of a basic human problem, without a break in style and with a gradually heightened tension in the woman's words. Whatever the initial reason for the conflict between the partners, the woman's emotional outburst is motivated enough by the husband's presence and by his legal rights over her. He wants to approach her against her will; he also has the right to do so; he is probably physically stronger than she--all reasons why she would feel effectively cornered and would act "on principle."

The husband's plight is not much better. Being married to a woman who does not want him, whether or not he chose to marry her, is sufficiently awkward. He has very little power to change the situation, and the only realistic course of action for him is to enforce his rights as husband by whatever means he can find. The solution he comes to, that of beating his wife, would make him a figure of comedy if it did not, in a poetic sense, show a certain verisimilitude. This is underscored by the preparatory acceleration of the dialogue.

The wife cries out at being beaten, declaring that her personal dignity has been violated. Up to this point the events are as much banal as they are dramatic or burlesque. But the violent clash of the partners' standpoints in the moment of the beating creates a dissonance of feeling too strong to let the poem end here. The subsequent appearance of the lover, the beating of the husband, and the final tête-à-tête of wife and lover are a logical enough conclusion in poetic terms. What in a real situation might well have caused a scandal, becomes here the anticipated outcome of an outrageous confrontation. For the tone of the whole poem is based on an incongruity:

on the one hand, the atmosphere is of song and dance; on the other hand, the events recorded in the poem are at once harsh and coarse. This harsh contrast between violence and joy is perhaps the most striking feature of the poem.

Enough place is given in the poem to the lover and to the idea of joy that we are not left with a song of hate. As in the story of Flamenca, the figure of the husband is treated with sympathy and justice; as in "A l'entrade" the conflict of interest and personalities is carefully escalated, so as not to lose any sympathies for the champions of joy.

But there are points in which the Provençal handling of theme differs from that of this poem. Although she becomes generalized in the course of the song, the wife is acting only on her own behalf. Her hatred for her husband is very pronounced and is not lessened by her final reunion with the lover. The conflict between the spouses remains as part of the final impression of the poem, especially since the solution brought by the lover comes so suddenly, dissolving the scene by taking away the woman. The lover changes nothing in the violent clash between husband and wife. The love between him and the woman works only as an agent of discord, and when he suddenly appears to beat the husband, his presence is justified more because he helps the woman in a moment of brutality than through any ties of mutual love. It appears that the poem is kept in balance by subtly mixed motivation and precariously arranged justice.

The poet has taken a great effort to make his song coherent. The work is no less tightly organized than is its Provençal counterpart. But in spite of the poem's highly developed technique, the harsh dissonances of a hateful quarrel between the husband and the wife and of the beating of the husband by the lover strike an imbalance which makes the reader pause. Given the poet's technical skill, it is not conceivable that this harshness and this tonal ambiguity could be anything but intentional. Furthermore, in the poem's lack of initial motivation, its strong note of hate and spite, and its failure to solve the conflict in a probable manner, it bears a close relationship to "Soufres, maris." It would seem that the poet has taken tradition as his justification for presenting an ugly event not in a burlesque way but in the joyous and semi-serious manner of respectable poetry. The contrast of tones gives rise to a certain strangeness, to the charm of the unreal, qualities which as the numerous copies of the poem would indicate, were very much in favour at the time.

In summary, the poem illustrates a process of development of the mal-mariée song which belonged originally in a pastoral framework. The theme is first isolated from this framework in the poetry of northern France. Through this isolation, the theme becomes less plausible, and this poem is an example of a poetic attempt to return to the old basis, thereby becoming more plausible. In other words, "En une präele" is at one and the same time a *chanson d'histoire* of the second generation, as such also a *chanson de la mal-mariée* and, in its setting and characters, a *pastourelle*. It is noteworthy that this combination of elements results in a more plausible plot structure than is usual in the *chanson d'histoire*, where the rescuing lover seems to appear from nowhere. This combining of elements is not mere coincidence. The *chanson d'histoire* arises out of the dancing song, the rhythmical structure of which is essential for the roundness of its poetic shape. At the same time, the dancing song, originally linked to pastoral imagery as the poetic vehicle for the creation of an isolated scene, is best realized in this manner. In its dancing structure, "En une präele" comes closer to the smaller *mal-mariée* songs.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter Three

[1] Nico van den Boogard, Rondeauz et refrains.

[2] Bartsch, Romances et pastourelles, Part 1, No. 22, Boogard, No. 193.

[3] Gennrich's edition in his Altfranzösische Lieder (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1955), pp.55-56, alters the mouves of the MS. to anuit, apparently for the sake of greater regularity.

[4] Bartsch, Part 1, No. 9 and Part 1, No. 45.

[5] For example, Molière, Le Bourgeois gentilhomme.

[6] Bartsch, Part 1, No. 57.

[7] Jean Frappier, "Vues sur les conceptions courtoises dans les littératures d'oc et d'oïl au XII^{e} siècle," Cahiers de civilisation médiévale, 2 (1959), 156:

> "Du moins il apparaît que le thème fondamental des romans antiques et des romans bretons, l'alliance courtoise de l'amour et de la chevalerie, dépend d'une tradition bien établie dans le Nord avant toute influence de la poesie d'oc, autant qu'il soit permis de juger."

[8] This ideological similarity between Guillaume de Dôle and Chrétien's work was already noted by Köhler, Ideal und Wirklichkeit, pp. 5-6.

[9] Hans Spanke, Eine altfranzösische Liedersammlung, No. 52.

CHAPTER FOUR

Disharmony in the _Pastourelle_

In this chapter on the _pastourelle_ I shall concentrate on one event, the rape of the young girl, which is a regular characteristic of the French poems and of a few of the _Carmina Burana_. This event has attracted my attention because it stands in such complete contrast to the peace of the _locus amoenus_, creating thereby what I have already called disharmony. For this discussion, I shall examine an Old French poem, "Quant voi la flor nouvele" (K, N, P, X; Rayn. 599). Following the results of this analysis, I shall give some further consideration to the complex question of the place of the _pastourelle_ in literary history. Before proceeding with my analysis of the poem, I shall present in brief some of the problems relating to the rape which are of importance to the discussion as a whole.

The strange mixture of delinquency and playfulness in the poem discussed in the preceding chapter I tentatively suggested to be a particular convention in Old French poetry. In fact, it is the dominant note of a large number of Old French and several medieval Latin _pastourelles_.[1] I have called "En une praele" a _chanson de la mal-mariée_, and my discussion of the poem was taken from that perspective, but both the beginning of the poem and the fact that the characters are shepherds make us ask whether the song is not a pastourelle as much as it is a chanson de la mal-mariée, and, further from this, whether it does not belong to the pastourelle group as much as all the other poems to which that name has generally been given. The answer would be "no" if we accept the definition of a pastourelle as a "type of lyric poetry which describes the meeting of a knight and a shepherdess in the fields or near a wood, his proposals of love, and the subsequent success or failure of his attempt."[2] This definition has served as a basis for numerous inquiries into the origin and nature of the poems that fall into the category. The scholarly work on this part of the medieval lyric has become quite bulky,[3] yet it seems to me that the constitution of such a genre is too narrow in several ways. Nearly all pieces that are called pastourelles develop the convention of the locus amoenus; and if we consider this convention to be a main constituent in these lyrics, then the pastourelle would have to be discussed within a huge framework of poetry that includes among others the dream allegory as exemplified by the Roman de la rose, such pastoral elegies as Chaucer's Book of the Duchess, nativity scenes with shepherds, pastoral drama like the Jeu de Robin et Marion, to name only a few which are contemporary to, or later than, the earliest pastourelles.[4] The whole area becomes even larger if we look at earlier poetic types, as is shown by the numerous books and articles on the subject.

But it is not my intention to explore the genre in the context of all its contemporary or antecedent affiliations, since this would be too ambitious a project. Rather, I shall proceed in the converse direction, namely in the area where the genre definition of the pastourelle seems too broad rather than too narrow. The definition based on the encounter between a young shepherdess and a knight includes poems of such a great variety of moods and contexts that a mere inventory of variants is not sufficient, since the particulars of a motif might seem the same in a variety of contexts, widely discrepant purposes becoming apparent when the text is assessed as a whole.[5] Thus, I shall concentrate not on the events as such, but on the mood that is created by their totality.

I have already said that I shall study in particular the event of the rape of the young girl. The note of disharmony created by the contrast between the rape and the locus amoenus has been called satirical by W.T.H. Jackson. This satire he sees as directed against the character "types" as portrayed in the poem.[6] A satirical application is worth considering, but it is my contention that this satirical or disharmonious note is an end in itself; it is the poem's unique form of artistic expression. I differ from Jackson in that I do not find internal evidence that this satire must be social, that is, that it is referential in any way. Disharmony is inherent in the situation as portrayed by the poem, and contains within itself its own validity and internal reference.

In order to understand this disharmony, it is necessary to examine poems in which related subject matter and form are to be found, even though they may not be included in the usual definition of *pastourelle*. "En une präele" belongs to the group by virtue of its rhythmical form, the nature of its landscape and characters, and its general development of mood. It serves well to counter Jackson's opinion that the *pastourelle* evolved as a contrast to the stereotyped cherishing of spiritual experience as exercised in the love *chanson*.[7] Although this seems convincing at first glance, there is in fact a contrast between *chansons* by Gace Brulé or Jaufrey Rudel and those set in the shepherd's pasture. But neither, in my opinion, is the courtly *chanson* in all its realisations so spiritual as to stimulate as a reaction to itself the portrayal of grossly physical events, nor do the peasant girls even in their encounter with a knight always demonstrate the traits of their class.[8] Against Jackson's view, too, is the fact that *pastourelles* developing class satire do not occur in Provençal, the main and original language of the *chanson*. Marcabru's "Lautrier jost' una sebissa," the only Provençal example cited by Jackson as a satirical poem, does not in any way fit into the argument of his paper. It is not the same thing to ridicule and shame an innocent country girl (even assuming this were the main point of a *pastourelle*) and to develop to absurdity the facile love displayed by a gentleman whose education should have taught him better. The tone of Marcabru's poem is more philosophical and educational than satirical, the confrontation between knight and *vilana* is more between two ethical positions than between two classes in the modern sense of the word. And as Köhler has explained in his article on the poem, the *vilana*, by her prompt and courteous answers, appears to be a noble lady in disguise, like the girls in the majority of all other Provençal *pastourelles*.[9]

Jackson's argument is best sustained by his examples from the *Carmina Burana*, which could have been profitably compared with numerous Old French examples, none of which he quotes. The old French and Medieval Latin *pastourelles* are roughly contemporary to each other, and thus more closely related to each other than to the early Provençal songs of Marcabru, closer also than all three would be to the poems of Walter von der Vogelweide and Neidhart, writt[illegible] in quite a different mood. It seems more valuable to the study of these poems to present my point of view instead of countering Jackson's position on the satirical aim of the poets, and that I do so with specific and detailed reference to one Old French poem which, in my estimation, is a prime example of both a well executed poem and of the kind of intentional disharmony I have been talking about. The poem I have chosen for this purpose is "Quant voi la flor nouvele:"[10]

I

Quant voi la flor nouvele
Paroir en la präele,
Et j'oi la fontenele
Bruire seur la gravele,
Lors mi tient amors nouvele
Dont ja no garrai:
Se cist maus ne m'assoage,
Bien sai que morrai.

II

"Je sui sade et brunete
Et jone pucelete,
S'ai coleur vermeillete,
Euz verz, bele bouchete;
Si mi point la mamelete
Que n'i puis durer;
Resons est que m'entremete
Des douz max d'amer.

III

Certes se je trouvoie
Qui m'en mëist en voie,
Volentiers ameroie,
Ja pour nul nel leroie;
Car bien ai öi retrere
Et por voir conter
Que nus n'a parfete joie,
S'el ne vient d'amer."

IV

Vers la touse m'avance
Pour öir s'acointance;
Je la vi bele et blanche,
De sinple contenance:
Ne mist pas en oublïance
Ce que je li dis.
Maintenant sanz demorance
S'amor li requis.

V

Pris la par la main nue,
Mis la seur l'erbe drue;
Ele s'escrie et jure
Que de mon gieu n'a cure.
"Ostez vostre lechëure,
Dex la puist honir;
Car tant m'est asprete et dure,
Ne la puis souffrir."

VI

"Bele tres douce amie,
Ne vos esmaiez mie:
Oncor ne savez mie
Con ce est bone vie.
Vo mere n'en mourut mie,
Ce savez vos bien:
Non fera certes la fille,
N'en doutez de rient."

VII

Quant l'oi despucelee,
Si s'est en piez levee,
En haut s'est escrïee:
"Bien vos sui eschapee.
Treze ans a que je fui nee.
Par mien escïent:
Onques mes n'oi matinee
Que j'amasse tant."

The poem, is structurally similar to "Ene une präele" insofar

as the stanzas all focus inward onto themselves. Here the middle falls roughly on the fifth or sixth lines. This results in a stanza structure of 2 parts, as opposed to the 3 parts of "En une präele." In the first part of each stanza the characters are depicted or their activity is indicated, and in the second part, a certain decision or resistance is expressed. This is slightly modified in the final stanza. In general it can be said that a greater change of situation takes place from stanza to stanza in this poem than in "En un präele," where the flux of events is delayed by the pre-existing stalemate between the two main characters. In "Quant voi la flor nouvele" the text is divided between two speakers only, between the narrator who is the male aggressor and the young girl who is raped. The story of the rape itself is quite straightforward, the girl being in every respect defenceless. The complexity arises in the portrayal of the man's motivation and in the ethical perspective. In stanza 1, the theme of the *chansons*, that man's love-longing is stimulated by the spring, is introduced. In the second stanza the girl tells us of her beauty and her erotic desire, quite in accordance with her youth and naivety, and to do so she describes the physical excitement that she feels. She concludes that she is ready for love. In the following stanza, however, she acknowledges her inexperience and her strong desire to be initiated into that art which, as she has heard, brings perfect pleasure. In stanza 4 the man, taken by her beauty, asks her, in her state of sexual excitement, to make love with him. Immediately thereafter, in stanza 5, he siezes her. One suspects that the decision to make love cannot have been made with coolness of judgement. The act of the rape itself is not stated until the beginning of stanza 7. Otherwise, it is suggested by the dialogue and by the lines: "I took her by the naked hand/ and laid her in the grass so green." The girl cries out that she cannot suffer the brutal assault. The man replies in the sixth stanza, pointing to the course of nature. Possibly to hide what has happened from any neighbours who might have been witness to part of the event, the girl shouts out that she has escaped him and, seemingly out of context, that she is thirteen years of age.

In sum, the poem tells the coarse story of a rape, and from the point of view of the man. It emphasizes the appealing nature of the girl, the shallow casuistics of the man, and the way in which he masters the approach as such. The girl's position is one of helplessness and ignorance. But is the poet satirical at her expense? This could perhaps be so if we were to see the narrator and the man as one, although even so the girl is weak only in her natural desires and in her reactions to the demeanor of a man whose only stimulus is pleasure. The girl is not to be despised for her innocence; rather this innocence is essential for the man's complete satisfaction. Her statement that she is thirteen years old does not develop from either dialogue or action, but is directly related to the portrayal of the man's lust. With it, the narrator underscores the fact that the man made love to a figure of innocence and of absolute virginity. Thus, there is a definite heightening of the poetic expression of the man's desire, from his lust, through his carnal attraction to the girl's beauty and youth, and finally to his glory at his destruction of innocence. The poem ends with the lyrical reverberations of the morning hymn, ironical in contrast to the preceding depiction of ravage. Spring and dawn, both images of renewal, provide a framework to a picture of its opposite. We can go one step further. The rape which is depicted is not a simple act of physical love, but shares with the concept of courtly love a claim to absolute perfection; the girl is very young, very beautiful, highly stimulated, and innocent. Like the images of spring and dawn, the girl represents the first awakening of life, and with it, of desire. In contrast to the man's desire is his brutal force, but also his cold artistry:

> Vo mere n'en mourut mie,
>   Ce savez vos bien
> Non fera certes la fille
>   N'en doutez de rient.

A kind of bliss that reaches the ideal seems unmotivated in a poem of this pattern. Violence and celestial joy are brought together in the man's bigotry.

Such an approach to a story of rape would be entirely unpresentable if it did not underline the man's immorality to the degree that it becomes in itself an object of artistic representation. An analysis of the theme and its portrayal throws some light onto the problem and elicits some interesting observations.

The first three stanzas of the poem precede any direct encounter between the man and the girl, and the last three stanzas are devoted to the telling of the encounter and of their separate reactions to it. The middle stanza, stanza 4, suggests the meeting of the two and prepares us choreographically for the staging of the next stanza. Thus, it is not the rape as such, but the coming together of the man and the girl, which serves technically as the centre of the poem. To some extent, that is also born out in thematic terms, as shall now be seen.

Stanza 1 is divided equally, four lines to each, to a description of the spring and to an avowal of the man's love longings. Flowers, meadows, fountains and water playing on the gravel are all, of course, appropriate stereotypes of spring for a poem of this sort. Similarly, the love longings of the narrator are not indicative of a particularly unique individual, nor do they prepare us for an unusual turn of events. The freshness of the love parellels, in words as well as in connotations ("nouvele" is applied to both), the freshness of the flower. The love and the flower have another quality in common: each is the adornment of its possessor, meadow or man. There is a sort of relationship between the setting and the man indicated by the narrator's listening to the water over the gravel. Furthermore, by the cataloguing of stereotypes and the parallel construction of the two halves of the stanza, we realize intuitively that the images of spring are to be understood at least in part symbolically, as the stirring of life renewed and as an affirmation of youth and fertility.

By these means, the introduction of a new speaker and a new character in the second stanza is not unprepared for. We have already experienced a progression from symbol to subject, and it is an easy stage from there to characterization. The narrator perceives the spring and, as we are told in the fourth stanza, perceives the girl. Thus, he stands in the middle, but not really in the focal point of the poem. Both the spring, with which the poem begins and finishes, and the girl, who takes up the most number of lines, are of more importance than he is. At this point, two stanzas are devoted to the girl, both given in direct dialogue. In them we are told, in surprisingly direct terms, of the love urges she feels but, at the same time, are led to realize that she is innocent. Her innocence finds its proof in the parallel between her qualities and the qualities of spring. She is fresh as spring dew, her cheeks are red with new life and she is very young. Furthermore, the pointed breasts suggest both sexual arousal and an image of young shoots piercing through the soil. Both stanzas 1 and 2 end with a two-line declaration of the speaker's attitude toward love. Both man and girl indicate a readiness to satisfy their longings, but there is a difference between the two. While the man sees the assuagement of his yearnings as the cure of an affliction, the girl sees it as the right and proper culmination of her youth. Thus, the girl and the spring are alike in that they are images of ripening, themselves unaware of the man who observes them, while the narrator perceives both and develops his sensuality as an answer to them.

In the third stanza the girl speaks more openly of love as an art, and shows her awareness both of the moral ambiguity pertaining to the act of love ("Ja pour nul nel leroie") and of the necessity of being initiated into the art ("Qui m'en mëist en voie"). Also important is her assertion, in the final lines of the stanza, that love is the perfect form of joy. This leaves us with the suggestion that the spring of life only has meaning through its own destruction, that the flower is there to to be plucked. The confrontation between the man and the girl, and the rape of the girl, would be far more brutal without those introductory stanzas. Stanzas 4 to 7 are a structure of movement of the two people, first toward and then away from each other. In the fourth stanza, the youthful appearance of the girl ("bele et blanche") and her longing for love provide the sensual (as opposed to any particular moral) justification for the man's aggression.

For the man, all ethical obstacles disappear in the extremes of his longing. As he draws closer to the girl, we hear no more from her, the narrator reporting only what has been recorded by the man's eyes. He first confirms his appetite through the beauty and white skin of the girl, and then he expresses his satisfaction at her high degree of receptivity. She is "de simple contenance," meaning that she is not likely to oppose him except with straightforward but insufficient strength, not with conquettish shyness. He immediately asks her to make love. It is an astounding accomplishment of the narrator to confine into one stanza what could have been a dialogue and what in a usual love relationship is the courting period. This telescoping of dramatic development reflects the man's wish to arrive quickly at his objective. Stanza 4 shows him indeed as a man in the state of physical mobilization, too much occupied by visual impressions to retain the sense of a word. In such a state of excitement the crucial point of the approach, the moment when the girl becomes aware of the man, is pending. Only the words "Ne mist pas en oubliance/ Ce que je li dis" tells us that some kind of contact is being established.

Stanza 4 is important for several reasons. For one thing, the focus of the stanza is completely that of the man, this one-dimensional perspective being underlined by the omission of any dialogue. As far as the inner world of the poem is concerned, it is here where the sexuality of the words confronts their object, emerging from an uncertain distance or the shelter of vegetation to heighten the feeling that the event is real. The man and the girl are brought together.

Counting stanzas and lines, we observe that we have come here to the end of the first half of the song.

After the ethical crisis in stanza 3, we have arrived now at the crisis of action from the technical and physical point of view.

The next two stanzas describe the circumstances of the rape. Stanza 5 is characterized by the vigorous simplicity of action and expression. No further mention is made of the man's taking possession of the girl until the last stanza. His sudden act of conquest shatters the peace of the scene, and his brutality is masked to some extent by a certain harmony that lies in the nature of maximum achievement. His strength, his skill and his technique even inspire a kind of empathy, although his method of cold trickery is hardly reconcilable with his search for perfect love. Poetically speaking, the act of conquest must seem a merging of two worlds which comprise not only different characters and different points of view, but also different settings. The moral dilemma arises from the qualitative difference between the girl and the spring. The man has his own personal relationship with the springtime landscape, and the girl emerges as a dream from a world of her own. The man intrudes on another human being and on another world.

Not until line 5 of the fifth stanza is the girl admitted into the dialogue. There is a gradual transition between the narrator's words in line 3, the indirect speech of the girl in line 4, and her direct speech in the rest of the stanza. The carnal directness of the opening lines is made less offensive in the second half of the stanza by the moral overtones of the girl's protest: "vostre lecheure," "honir" and "asprete et dure" have an abstract or moral sense as well as an obvious concrete one. Has there been a change in the character of the girl between the third stanza where she claims to be ready for erotic knowledge, and the fifth stanza, where she protests the immorality of the rape? Such might have been the case, but for the girl's indication that she is already aware of the moral ambiguity of the art of love. It is rather important that here the physical act and the moral dilemma should be introduced at one and the same time. In stanza 5, erotic lyricism (with the mention of the maiden's hand and the thick grass), brutality (indicated by the girl's struggles) and social morals are given, as it were, more or less equal time. It would appear, from this poem at least, that there is no easy solution to the conflict between the beauty of passion and the ugliness of its consequences.

In stanza 6, the man replies to the girl's protestations. The general tone is mocking. Since the man has already forced the girl to the ground, his argument, that he is following nature's laws, seems more like a justification after the fact. His wisdom has a proverbial touch and is a proclamation of victory over the mother who teaches her daughter restraint. This aspect of invective is underscored throug the alliteration of "mere" with "mourut" and "mie" in the fifth line, and the effect is extended, two lines later, by the alliteration of "fera" with "fille." At the same time, there is a certain mocking tone created through the continuation of the train of thought begun by the girl herself in stanza 3. The difference is two-fold; first, it is the man who now speaks, and he will not have to suffer the consequences of his deed in the way the girl will; second, the first declaration precedes the physical facts of rape, while the second speech succeeds it, or indeed occurs simultaneously to it. Thus, we are also drawn into the moral dilemma, and a definite dichotomy is now achieved between the narrator and the listener/author.

In stanza 7, the rape is confirmed ("despucelee"), and the poem ends, oddly it would appear, with the girl's avowal of youth and retained purity, and the narrator's praise, not of love, but of the morning. The girl's cry that she has escaped her aggressor and that she is but a thirteen-year-old become interwoven with the structure and rhythms of a morning song, so that the symbolism of the opening is reversed: rather than spring symbolizing love, the girl's cry now symbolizes the song of a bird in the morning. Nature initiates and concludes the poem. A further parallel between the first and the last stanzas lies in the fact that both begin with the word "quant."

Thus, a pattern emerges in the poem in which we discern a perfectly balanced structure of axial symmetry. Stanzas 1 and 7, as we have noted, are clearly parallel to each other, with the symbolism reversed. The middle of the poem constitutes the crisis of the action for, as we have seen, it is the encounter between the two, not the rape itself, which is of central importance thematically and ethically. Stanzas 2 and 3 proclaim the glory of love without the brutal knowledge of its consequences. These appear in stanzas 5 and 6, through the description of the rape, the pathos of the girl's struggles, her moral protestations, and the man's cynical, mocking reply. Thus, in an important way, these stanzas balance each other. The balancing of the four stanzas is even more intricate, however, in the inversion of their order, since it is in stanza 6 that the theme of love as a natural celebration (initiated in stanza 2) takes place, and it is in stanza 5 that the moral connotations of the physical act, introduced in stanza 3, are declared.

Special attention must be given to the relationship between stanzas 3 and 5. As we have noted earlier, the climax of confrontation between man and girl in the middle of stanza 4 reverses the modality of the man's approach from ethical caution to a self-righteous execution of his wishes. Stanzas 3 and 5 underscore the totality of this reversal. The girl's assertion that she would love to be shown the art of love is answered by the opening lines of the fifth stanza in a way that she had not quite foreseen. The expression of her total willingness in lines three and four of stanza 3 is contrast in the same lines of stanza 4 with her belated expression of dismay. In the same way, the last lines of the two stanzas bring out the contrast between her expectations of love and the brutal reality of the situation.

In stanza 3, the erotic exuberance of the girl's self-portrait serves well as background to the verbal violation of her person in stanza 6. The symmetrical arrangement of those stanzas is underscored by the echo of images between the first lines: "Je suis sade et brunete," and "Bele tres douce amie." The echo between the first and the last stanza goes as far as the use of the same word, "quant," as we have seen. Further, "flor nouvele" contains a shade of the meaning found in "despucelee." This might seem to suggest a burlesque note, if it were not for the similarities between the rest of the lines which show us something very amazing in its beauty: the figure of the girl merges into the initial image of the poem. In the second line of the first stanza the flower is said to adorn the meadow; in the second line of the last stanza, the girl appears from the meadow ("Si s'est en piez levee"). Sound is paralleled in the third lines of each stanza: the splashing sound of water over gravel, and the loud, exuberant cry of the girl. Young love, in line 5 of the first stanza, is echoed by the youthful age of the girl, in the same line of the seventh stanza. The stanzas end with the man's expression, in stanza 1, of utter pain and, in stanza 7, of superb joy.

The symmetrical balance of the poem allows for a high economy of diction, which paradoxically leads to the impression that its language is simple. The second major achievement of the poem is the presentation in an acceptable way of a very difficult theme, the rape of an innocent girl. A highly developed technique is used to create a language both daring and cautious, one that expresses delicately such facts that could otherwise appear as rather indelicate. The combination of economy and delicacy is of special importance in those parts that make a short poem short, namely its beginning and its end. The devices that make the end of the song join the beginning are the concordance of the images in a manner of what might be called retroactive metamorphosis. As crass as the final scene may appear, its crudity become violent beauty in the merging of the girl's figure with the newly emerged flower of spring. This final impression is only possible because, due to its joining of beginning and end, the episode in itself has no "before" and no "after." Time is suspended in the "quant" with which both stanzas begin. The two words are only the same on the formal plane, the meaning of each being quite different. The first "quant" refers to the time of eternal recurrance, and the second points to a very particular instance, as is underlined by the adverbial expression of temporal exclusivity "onques mes." The effect of this change in meaning is of note. With it, objectivity becomes ambiguity, pure joy becomes temporal satisfaction. But, also, the temporal is enhanced by the timeless. This double-sidedness has an important function in the meaning of the poem. Through it, the narrator can at one and the same time partake of the feelings of the girl and those of the man. He can delight in the contemplation of the highest joy, whilst revelling in lascivious pleasure. He brings together love and lust.

The foregoing interpretation is supported by the internal ethical balance of the poem. The principal reason for qualifying the main event of the poem as "brutal rape" is that it stands in contrast to the beauty of the *locus amoenus*. It would be useful to know what the poet and his audience really thought about rape, but a modern commentator can hardly avoid having a twentieth-century moral view. Would it be possible, considering the misogynous tendencies of the Middle Ages, that the girl was considered to have enjoyed herself? In any case, the poem could be given a burlesque tone through the manner of its performance. However, while it is true that women can be objects of satire and derision in medieval literature, the locus amoenus maintains a serious and venerable quality. A main characteristic of the girl is that she is partly identified with the locus amoenus. To deride her would be a break in style, hardly conceivable in a poem so carefully composed. Of course, a less discriminating audience might not see this, and the pastourelle can descend quite low, as with those included in the Carmina Burana.[12]

The ethical problem created by "Quant voi la flor" is a difficult one. The general tenor is playful but serious, its concept of love too one-dimensional to sustain the least quantity of humour. The poet, although obviously detached from the man at one level, is seen in an ambiguous union with him, since only his point of view is expressed. The culprit thus becomes both anonymous and somehow universal. His own justification for the violence of his deed is based on the uncontrollability of natural desire. Atrocious though such a justification may seem, it was nevertheless easily accepted by a certain group of medieval literary public, by the same kind of people who enjoyed the songs of the so-called Archipoeta, whose "Confession" expressed the right of the individual to live and to fulfil his basic physical needs. As explanation, the poet refers to the corruption of the times, comparing it to the moral superiority of antiquity.

Of course, there is nothing new in maintaining that the *pastourelle* is somehow connected with the so-called Goliardic movement. This connection can be seen in the ethical framework of the poem as I have analyzed it. But the poems in the Goliardic collections are mere copies of the events which constitute the Old French *pastourelles*, and lack entirely on all linguistic levels the fine texture of Old French examples. However great the contribution of the wandering scholars may have been, the form of the *pastourelle* is a product of a highly developed vernacular tradition, and we have seen in our discussion of "Quant voi la flor nouvele" how strictly its content depends on its form.

This form in itself and its place in the literary tradition deserves some attention. Spanke calls the poem a *rotrouenge*, for the reason that an almost identically formed poem bears that title in another manuscript. We must take into consideration, however, the fact that we know of no proven etymology of *rotrouenge*, which means that we do not know why the poem in question receives that name, whether for its musical form, its rhyme strucutre, its rhythm, or for some minor or circumstantial characteristic.

It is obvious that our poem is very similar in many ways to other poems of the time. Questions concerning the relation of this poem in literary history, and further developments of the round or dance structure, including its place in Old English lyrical poetry, will occupy the following chapter.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter Four

[1] See W.T.H. Jackson, "The Medieval Pastourelle as a Satirical Genre," Philological Quarterly, 31 (1952), 156-170.

[2] W.P. Jones, The Pastourelle: A Study of the Origins and Tradition of a Lyric Type (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1931).

[3] For an excellent list of such works, see the bibliography to W.D. Paden, "The Medieval Pastourelle."

[4] For further information on this idea, see Ernst Robert Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, trans. Willard R. Trask, Bollingen Library (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), Chapter x.

[5] As pointed out initially by Friedrich Ranke, Volkssagenforschung: Vorträge und Aufsätze (Breslau: Maruschke and Berendt, 1935), pp. 20ff.

[6] Jackson, p. 170: included in the satire are the naive peasant girl, the shrewish mother, and the crude knight. Jackson calls the genre "essentially sophisticated, cynical."

[7] Ibid., p.159.

[8] In this I differ from the point of view expressed by Lazar, Amour courtois.

[9] Köhler, "Marcabrus L'autrier jost' una sebissa und das Problem der Pastourelle," Romanistisches Jahrbuch, 5 (1952), 256-268.

[10] The text is taken from Spanke, Eine altfranzösische Liedersammlung, No. 7.

[11] This is at least the impression given in E.R. Curtius, European Literature, Chapter x.

[12] Carmina Burana, ed. Alfons Hilka and Otto Schumann (Heidelberg: Winter, 1941), I, Nos. 184, 185, for example.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Emergence of The Modern Ballad

We have now examined a selection of Provençal and Old French lyrics in which a certain formal and ethical pattern can be ascertained. It is the purpose of this chapter to identify the essence of that pattern. In other words, my task here is to discover which features of the poems discussed remain constant, and which ones are notable in their absence. Following the method of my previous analyses, my discussion will include both a look at the songs as poetry--that is, formally--and as expressions of the troubadour love ethic. Having discovered the pattern to which I believe these poems belong, I shall look ahead and examine one example of a poem in Middle English which, I believe, continues in the same pattern, modifying it in its own way.

I: The Ballad Form in Context

I shall begin where I left off--with the poem "Quant voi la flor nouvele"--and view it in relation to "En une praele" and "A l'entrade." While the two Old French poems have obvious similarities, which I have already pointed out, especially on the structural level, it is clear that they reflect in quite strict terms a difference in their contents; one is a story of physical union, the other, of mental and physical disagreement.

Thematically, there is a connection between "En un präele" and the Provençal song "A l'entrade." Both are linked in form and content to the concept of dancing. In "A l'entrade" the dance is mentioned in the poem itself, and the poem follows a pattern of axial symmetry both in the individual stanzas and with regard to the whole text. In "En une präele" the rhythmical sequence in each stanza and the words ask for certain gestures which could best be realized in the movement of a dance. What makes the French song different from "A l'entrade" is that the unfolding of its meaning is so much subordinated to the idea of conflict that the ultimate climax is reached only shortly before its rather artificial ending. As a result, the nearly circular pattern of the individual stanzas is not sufficient to create a satisfactorily round structure for the whole of the poem. Circularity is not so large a compositional problem in the Provençal poem, for there the "regine avrillouse" is structurally and thematically in the centre, figuratively speaking always in a place on which the eye can rest.

In "Quant voi la flor nouvele" a nearly round structure is achieved. But the artistic effort required to create this round effect is very great for a type of poem usually considered to be frivolous. Moreover, axial symmetry of the poem as a whole is achieved at the expense of balance in the individual stanzas. A further feature distinguishes this poem from its Provençal counterpart in this regard. In stanza 4, the point of circular harmony is at the same time a point of extreme tension, even of aggression. Love is not taken for granted as a feeling and event between persons of the same mind as it clearly does in the Provençal text, but takes a dualistic aspect. The figure of the girl belongs to an ideal world as reflected in the man's one-dimensional mind, and into which the man intrudes.

In short, all three of these poems have a certain formal similarity in that they all are connected in some way to the dance. Thematically, the easy harmony in the Provençal poem between the concepts of female freedom and innocent love becomes separated and less coherent in the Old French Poems. The link between the difference in the form--that is, in the perfection of the round structure--and the differences in the concept of love remain to be studied.

First, let it be said that all three poems, despite the major difference, would seem to belong together in some way; the question remains as to whether this mutual relationship can be called a literary genre, and, if so, what this genre would be called. The name which it is given must be justifiable both in the immediate medieval context and in a modern range of terminology that encompasses a development of forms over several centuries. This genre is not like the sonnet with a fairly strict correlation between content and form. We have discovered in the examination of our poems that "Quant voi la flor nouvele" has a very definite form, and one which links it to other poems. Yet those other poems with which we found structural affinities cannot be called *pastourelles*--particularly not in the case of the Provençal poem. With all three poems, a definite form can be discovered, that form correlates closely with the theme, and differences in content account in all cases for a difference in form. It is clear that *pastourelle* is not the term we are seeking.

In general terms, as we have seen, the outer event or social occasion for all three poems is the dance. This is markedly so for the Provençal poem, and less marked but still clearly so in "En une prăele." In "Quant voi la flor nouvele," only the round structure reminds us of what might have been the case initially, for it is hard to imagine how the poem as it stands could ever have been danced in distributed roles. This last poem, however, while it is farthest from the dance structurally, comes closest in its strong narrative component and in its succession of dramatic peaks to a form of poem the name of which originates in a term for dancing, and the content of which is no longer usually connected with this activity. That poetic form is the ballad.

The connection between ballad as a name and as a genre, between the name and the verb ballar or bailar--to dance--and between the genre and the communal recital of traditional songs to the accompaniment of communal dancing in the distant past--all this remains unclear and a subject of debate. Without delving into the question in all its ramifications, I would like to offer, not a solution, but a small piece of contributive evidence, a small link in the chain.

There is a clear connection between the Old French poems based on a dance structure and those poems in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries composed by well-known authors from Guillaume de Machaut to François Villon, also called ballades. But to see a connection between these poems of mostly serious and non-narrative content and the later English ballads would require considerably more evidence than we now have, and very likely no such connection could be established anyway.

This argument loses some of its force when we consider that scholars recognize the direct affiliation between the French pastourelle and its Middle English counterpart, of which there are few examples.

There are fourteenth-century pastourelles by Froissart, of a very serious character, consisting of a mostly theoretical argument and quite different in their versification from both earlier Old French and contemporary Middle English examples. The relationship between earlier and later kinds of ballads and pastourelles would be an intriguing subject, but it seems that as an obstacle in the way of our theory it can be left aside for sound chronological reasons.

Rather than contribute further to speculation on the origin and development of the ballad, my approach has been to demonstrate on the specific level of a limited control group the way in which the round structure has correlated with other structural and with ethical factors. The gradual disappearance of the specific dance accompaniment, and the gradual appearance of narrative content I have shown to be not merely arbitrary, but firmly grounded in a disruption and reorganization of poetic principles and ethical conventions.

In chronological terms, the French poems we have examined seem to represent a stage that is dependent upon the Provençal ones, and, as we shall see later, the English follows the French mode of development. But it is quite obvious that the Old French poems also possess qualities the origin of which cannot be sought in Provençal poetry, and a similar independence characterizes the genre in English. What most disturbs the idea of a chronological line of dependency, however, is the almost simultaneous appearance of "ballads" in the three languages under discussion. "A l'entrade" appears only once, and in the same manuscript (Saint-Germain-des-Prés, one of the oldest jongleur repertoires) with a version of une präele." The song "Quant voi la flor nouvele" is written down in manuscripts of roughly the same age. The first Middle English examples appear already in the famous Harley collection. Although the earliest French manuscripts containing the songs in question are usually dated at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and the Harley collection at the beginning of the fourteenth century, this does not constitute good chronological evidence at a time when datings can easily miss the mark by about fifty years. Another source of error is the possible discrepancy between the dates of composition and copy. Since all the songs under discussion here, and most of the others, are anonymous, no dating can be established through knowledge of the lives of the poets themselves.

Before going into more details about the development of this type of poem, a cautionary remark is in order. We must assume that much material has disappeared completely. The best we can do is to reconstruct a possible course of development on the basis of structural and thematic analysis. Many factors are involved in the transmission of a poetic genre from one culture to another. When speaking of influence, it is wise to assume that we are unaware of a large number of these factors, and thus to proceed with caution.

First I will examine the nature of this apparent influence between the French and Provençal areas. Not only are these areas closest to each other, but also the restriction of the form to a limited range of subject matter--the themes of the _pastourelle_ and of the _mal-mariée_--facilitates the comparison. It should also be noted that all the poems under scrutiny are roughly contemporary to each other.

That a certain relationship exists between "A l'entrade" and Old French poems of a similar type has long been recognized, and I have devoted the second chapter of this enquiry to a detailed discussion of this relationship. I would like to go beyond this, however, and argue that in "A l'entrade" the nucleus of the French _pastourelle_ can be found.

It is my contention that scholarship has been side-tracked by the existence of Marcabru's _pastourelle_, which is usually seen as the remotest ancestor of all the later ones. For several reasons I do not accept this theory. Marcabru's poem, like the Old French _pastourelle_, centers around the notions of convoitise, of innocence and of the course of nature. These notions, however, occur generally in the courtly range of ideas and cannot in themselves constitute a genre. Marcabru's originality lies mainly in the personification of common sense by the vilana. This turn of the story, however, was never copied, and perhaps was not even understood by many people. Thirdly, the stern master was playing with a certain credulous reverence towards the natural, and he criticized a notion that spring, as a new beginning, would also renew the primeval innocence of both mind and body. Yet the peasant girl in later creations was of an entirely different type, sometimes witty, sometimes languishing, sometimes crude, but never with such a well-structured philosophical depth of mind. And certainly she is not the female type found in "Quant voi la flor nouvele," even though she has the qualities of solitude, simplicity, virginity, and beauty. Finaly, Marcabru handles the notion of tradition versus the natural in a philosophical manner, and his poem seems to be more a reaction to the cult of the natural and to social conventions than that of a formulation of a new poetic mode. In "A l'entrade," in contrast, the complete simplicity and self-contained character of the form seems the perfect vehicle for the expression of traditional morality and ethical norms. The potential of the form remains, even after the idea of tradition dwindles. In fact, the depiction of an isolated event and the internal coherence of the structure are significant characteristics of all the poems under discussion, as I hope my metrical analyses have demonstrated. What makes "Quant voi la flor nouvele" as different from Marcabru's pastourelle and so much like "A l'entrade" is that its form reflects the simplicity which its theme depicts.

Granting this similarity between the Provençal and the Old French poems, I shall now look at their differences, as they reflect the development of the form thematically and structurally. In my discussion of "A l'entrade," I tried to show that in the poem the concepts of feminine independence and of sexual innocence are brought into harmony. Basically, free love is innocent because it is allowed, and because it follows a long-established ritual. Despite its smoothness, the poem contains a certain note of discord. In the mal-mariée poems, this note of discord has become magnified to the dimensions of a violent disharmony. With the pastourelle, the case is more paradoxical, since the disharmony it reflects arises out of events which, in "A l'entrade," form the very nucleus of harmony and well-being. The principles of formal balance remain intact, but the ethical basis of the Provençal poem is disrupted. In other words, without denying the originality of the achievement of the Old French poets, the original form would seem to be Provençal. The southern form of the name for ballad confirms this assumption.

Two questions arise from this. We must ask ourselves, first, whether any earlier poems in Provençal can be found which would demonstrate the development of the form, and, second, whether similar forms may have existed in the north which could have been incorporated into the imported one. To answer the second question first, we should look at the mal-mariée poem, "Soufes, maris." This poem could be identified as a carole, a name that also associates the form with dancing and, because it is French, may give rise to speculations that we are dealing with an indigenous French form. Indeed, the technique of the poem seems structurally simpler than that of the others in the mal-mariée group. Since the poem and its argument are also much shorter, its form, although sophisticated enough, has to fulfill a less ambitious purpose. The theme seems clearly to be Provençal and the manuscript itself calls the poem a ballete or small ballad. A very plausible interpretation would seem to be that this poem reflects the attempts of a French poet to come to terms with troubadour art, perhaps drawing quite heavily on a native traditional form in so doing. The very brevity of the song, however, and the absence of any introductory remarks or commentary leave us in the dark as to the poem's cultural importance and to its relation to the art of the north and the south. There seems to be less correlation of language and form than in, for example, "Quant voi la flor nouvele;" its main structural device is rhyme, as is the case in a number of types of Provençal lyrics. Because of this emphasis of language over form, the argument of the poem could easily be translated from one language into another, from one poetic unit to another, and especially where both languages used rhyme. The simplicity inherent in the polemic representation of a conflict helps greatly in keeping the language of the poem at a rational level.

"C'est la jus," the short poem with the pastoral love theme, differs slightly in this respect. There, the intricacies of phonetic and semantic patterns remove the language slightly from the rational framework. Nevertheless, it has a large mimetic and intellectual scope in the precarious balance between scenery, characters and audience. This poem provides at least a tentative answer to the question of Provençal-French influence. Due to the position of the poem within the romance of Guillaume de Dôle, we have some idea as to the role the poem played in society, at least as far as the author was concerned, and we know also the author's portrayal of the tradition from which the poem came. The author certainly saw the poetic form as a native one, but he glorified the native tradition to such an extent that it became a part of primeval naturalness, unbound by cultural ties. The setting of the romance also identifies the poem as ancient in the specific sense of "coming from a better age." The author sees the creation of this type of song as spontaneous, while the spontaneity of the singer does not occupy the rank of a supreme creative force in the romantic sense, but is considered as the sort of gracefulness of people who are innocent and look at nature with deep empathy. Despite the shortness of the caroles which are included in the romance, they are seen as complete songs, complete in the sense that they capture the mood of the singer in a moment of happiness. Furthermore, they are communal, in the sense that the words and phrases are simple, repetitive, and easily memorized. The romance itself is a demonstration of the manner in which these songs can be expanded and improvised in a moment of inspiration. This repetition of formulas, however, is used by the author in such a sophisticated way that we easily forget their mnemonic purpose. Finally, the carole may accompany a dance, but it may also be sung in any other kind of merrymaking that does not include dancing. As such, the tradition is preserved in the English Christmas carol, and while carole and carol are somewhat different in form and purpose, the English language has conserved with considerable exactitude the thirteenth-century sense of the French word.

As I have demonstrated in Chapter ii, the differences in the form between the mal-mariée and the pastourelle and caroles which I analysed reflect exactly the difference in the contents of the two. There is nothing in the form of either to indicate a difference in social function. A certain identity of the two can, therefore, be tentatively seen.

Of the two, the pastoral carol is of particular interest to us, because it is pervaded by patterning on all linguistic levels of the type that is brought to high perfection in the pastourelle. Thematically, "C'est la jus" occupies an intermediary stage between the Provençal ethic and that of the pastourelle, insofar as it represents a kind of love in which the two partners participate on equal terms. Much of this conception of love is contained in the setting of the romance rather than in the poem itself, the carol giving the impression of reflecting the ethic because the problems of self-centered interest and of jealousy have been effectively dealt with in the romance. The form of the poem in itself is not sufficient to shape pastoral harmony with a higher degree of interior verisimilitude. For this, a different form was required, and the ballad form succeeded in satisfying those demands.

Different as carol and ballad may be in their scope of representation, they are nevertheless united through a number of common traits: circularity, generic motivation in dancing, compactness of expression and the vast extension of symmetry into the sub-rational domain of sound.

Certainly, in comparison to the *ballade pastourelle*, the form of the pastoral carol seems simple, a fact which gives rise to a feeling of primitivism. Indeed, as we have seen, Jean Renart saw the *caroles* as compositions created from the heart, rather than composed in a more literary sense. The use and repetition of formulas is a sign of the innovative, and possibly communal mode of creation. These signs are, however, slightly misleading. Firstly, what appears to be simplicity is actually an intricate poetic structure. This can be explained, since there is some evidence that dancing songs of the carol type existed somewhat earlier. We have already mentioned the poem of the dancers of Kölbigk:

> Equitabat Bovo per silvam frondosam
> Ducebit secum Mersuinden formosam
> Quid stamus? cur non imus?

Here, two characteristics seem to be in common with the Old French carols--the importance of the vegetation setting, and the incitement to dance by the example of a dancing couple of somewhat mythical stature. We can carry this comparison even further, and include in it the Provençal poem "A l'entrade." In its springtime setting and the figure of the queen, this poem seems to be part of the same tradition. "A l'entrade," it should be noted, is probably older than the others, perhaps the oldest text of this kind, and in it we can observe the gradual development away from ritual orientation and toward generic self-motivation.

The *carole* in northern France may have been originally an unrecorded form. It also seems to have been used as a vehicle for the development of the *ballade* form in that area, as an apprenticeship for the creation of a structually motivated ornate style. At any rate, between the *carole* and the Old French ballad two developments seem to have taken place. Firstly, French poets seem to have acquired and adapted to their own use the compositional techniques of Provençal poetry. Secondly, and as we were able to observe in the treatment of the *mal-mariée* theme, the French poets began to cling slavishly to the native tradition. In other words, the poets seem to have taken over what they understood to be traditional forms and experimented with them in their search for new approaches. This can be observed even better in the development of the *pastourelle* theme, as far as the concomitant variety of the form is concerned. It has already been noted that the same compositional methods of parallelism, chiasm and axial symmetry are applied, and in a similar way, to both "C'est la jus"--where the scenery and the two figures are in perfect balance with each other--and in "Quant voi la flor nouvele"--where certain lines correspond to the main argument of the pastoral carol and are structured phonetically in the manner of the *carole*. This concentration on the meticulous imitation of a pre-existing vernacular form would seem to imply a strong interest in native and national tradition. Such traditionalism is familiar to us from the later history of the ballad.

To come back to the notion of the *pastourelle* as a satirical genre, we can now observe that satire, if any, is not directed against the love concept of the "courtly" love *chanson* as such, but that it is rooted in a particular tension between the notion of harmony in the pastoral carol and the postulate of verisimilitude. Harmony in the carol is based on the idea of a better and ealier age in which the carol finds its milieu. Disharmony in the *pastourelle* ballad is not a negation of this harmony as such, but the transpositon of the harmony principle into a setting of modern corruption. Satire would be too weak a term for this phenomenon. The *pastourelle* is permeated by something much sharper than satire: the traumatic feeling inherent in a composition that evolves in the knife's-edge region between edification and pornography, between holiness and crime. The personality that comes within such a light is mainly that of the narrator himself. Does he criticize his own human weakness? Does he frolic over his adventure? Does he see what he is doing? To what degree are poet, narrator and male character the same person? These questions remain questions; they are raised but not answered. Part of the force of the poem comes from the problems posed. In a poem in which profane love stands in the symbolical frame of the locus amoenus, it is not surprising that the structure is multi-layered, not one-dimensional, and that the poetic mode is paradox, not satire.

The poems I have chosen for close scrutiny are excellent examples of good poetics. They stand out for their compactness and careful composition. In "Quant voi la flor nouvele" we have observed the functional unity of form and content. Unlike the epic, which is removed in time, the pastourelle places itself in the very near past. Certainly, in "Quant voi la flor nouvele" one is given the impression that the narrator is telling something which is still fresh in his mind. He relives the emotions, the decision-making, the pleasures, as one relives the phases of a traumatic event.

Looking at the development of the type of poem

I call the ballad, it is worthy of notice that in Old French its content should be limited to the themes of the _pastourelle_ and the _mal-mariée_. The same limited scope can be seen in the French _chanson_, which stands in contrast to the rich variety of the form in Provençal, German and Italian. I would tentatively explain this apparent poverty of imagination by pointing to something I have already noted, namely, the tenacious clinging to native tradition, even in the minutest detail. Poetically and ethically, the French poet venerates his own conventionalized cultural heritage. Furthermore, at that stage a variety of content would not have seemed compatible with the form, a centrally balanced poem being considered the appropriate vehicle only for the theme of love as the principle of universal harmony. The conception of love, still quite flexible in the early Provencal texts, has become very rigid after its transplantation to the north. The Provençal poet could treat his theme with some irony, and he knew that social convention was not compatible with ethical rigour. The French imitator, however, attempted to bring the poetic myth into collision with social ethic, and the effect was of tragedy and paradox. This ethic was the manifestation of a slavishly maintained tradition of social life. French pastourelle-ballads combine a highly disciplined form with a persistent thematic weakness. Both traits are lost in early English adaptations.

II: A Possible French-English Connection: "De Clerico et Puella"

French influence in England was, however, very great indeed. As we know, England had a French literature of its own, even at a time before much literary activity existed in the centre of France. Even though Anglo-Norman French literature follows a pronouncedly more orthodox Christian vein than the works written under the auspices of French royalty, we can assume that the English came into prolonged contact with both the poetry and the social forms of northern France through personal exchange.

One aspect of this exchange, namely the establishment of the ballad form in English poetics, is of interest here. English balladry, as we think of it now, is an original form with no trace of imitation from another language. If we consider one of the more typical examples of English balladry, such as the much later "Edward" ballad, it is true that it has some characteristics in common with the Old French poems we have been studying. Both have a mixture of what is commonly called epic, dramatic and lyric elements; both are representations of a traumatic event; structurally, both are compact and are composed in a swift succession of about three dramatic peaks; and, finally, with both is implicit the notion that they stem in one way or another from an old national tradition. Yet the two forms are more unlike than they are alike, and the main difference seems to be that the unique themes of the French ballad, the *pastourelle* and *mal-mariée* themes, are hardly represented at all in the wide schematic scope of English ballads. This is all the more puzzling, since at least a thousand of the later *pastourelles* have been collected in the French part of the continent. In other words, the English ballad has taken over and adapted the structure of the French ballad, but not its theme.

It is true that in the fifteenth century a number of *pastourelles* were composed in England, sometimes with a hint of the *mal-mariée* theme. Helen E. Sandison made an extensive study of these songs, which she calls *chansons d'aventure*.[1] Without summarizing her arguments, we can say that these poems copy the French poems in almost every thematic detail, without, however, translating the form. An imitation of this sort, resulting from a superficial concern with genre, could obviously not create a durable and truly adapted English counterpart. Nor can these poems be the origin of the liberated English ballad form. A process of adaptation must have occurred much earlier and, indeed, Sandison discusses a few poems of the fourteenth century that are reminiscent of the *pastourelle*. The imitation of one or two formulas, however, does not prove much, as it is only to be expected as the side-effect of close French-English contacts. It still has not been determined how a French form, rigorously linked to a specific theme and to the expressive means of the French vernacular, came to be adapted to Middle English. I shall attempt to answer this question by discussing one of the few lyrics which have come down to us from earliest times, a poem from the Harley collection which is almost a model of both ballad and *pastourelle*, "De Clerico et Puella." In this poem, the ethical exactness of its French ancestry is shed, but the high level of dramatic compactness has been retained.

DE CLERICO ET PUELLA[2]

'My deþ y loue, my lyf ich hate, for a leuedy shene,
heo is briht so daies liht, þat is on me wel sene;
al y falewe so doþ þe lef in somer when hit is grene.
Ȝef mi þoht helpeþ me noht, to wham shal y me mene?

Sorewe ant syke ant drery mod byndeþ me so faste
þat y wene to walke wod ȝef hit me lengore laste;
my serewe, my care, al wiþ a word he myhte awey caste.
Whet helpeþ þe, my suete lemmon, my lyf þus forte gaste?'

'Do wey, þou clerc, þou art a fol wiþ þe bydde y noht chyde;
shalt þou neuer lyue þat day mi loue þat bou shalt byde.
Ȝef þou in my boure art take, shame þe my bityde;
þe is bettere on fote gon þen wycked hors to ryde'

'Weylawei! Whi seist þou so? Þou rewe on me, þy man!
Þou art euer in my þoht in londe wher ich am.
Ȝef y deȝe for bi loue, hit is þe mykel sham;
þou lete me lyue ant be bi luef ant þou my suete lemman.'

'Be stille, þou fol, y calle þe riht; cost þou neuer blynne?
Þou art wayted day ant nyht wiþ fader ant al my kynne.
Be þou in mi bour ytake, lete þey for no synne
me to holde ant þe to slon, þe deþt so þou maht wynne!'

'Suete ledy, þou wend þi mod, sorewe þou wolt me kyþe.
Ich am al so sory mon so ich was whylen blyþe.
In a wyndou þer we stod we custe vs fyfty syþe;
feir biheste makeþ mony mon al is serewes mythe.'

Weylawey! Whi seist þou so? Mi serewe þou makest newe.
Y louede a clerk al par amours, of loue he wes fel trewe;
he nes nout blyþe neuer a day bot he me sone seȝe;
ich louede him betere þen my lyf, whet bote is hit to leȝe?'

'Whil y wes a clerc in scole, wel muchel y couþe of lore;
ych haue þoled for by loue woundes fele sore,
fer from hom ant eke from men vnder be wode-gore.
Suete ledy, þou rewe of me; nou may y no more!

'Þou semest wel to ben a clerc, for þou spekest so stille;
shalt þou neuer for mi loue woundes þole grylle;
fader, moder, ant al my kun ne shal me holde so stille
þat y nam þyn ant þou art myn, to don al þi wille.'

The poem consists of nine stanzas, each of four septenaries. Every stanza ends on its own particular rhyme; there is occasional alliteration and a few figures of speech. It is striking that the rhetorical ornamentation of the poem seems to function by smoothing and varying the flow of speech rather than by bringing out otherwise elusive meanings, as it tends to do in the French poems we discussed. Thus, in the English poem, the theme is evolved on the rational level.

The poem consists of a discussion between a young scholar and a girl, and the emotions behind their words play an important part in the meaning of the poem. The scholar attempts to persuade the girl to accept his love, and he finally succeeds. The poem is like "Quant voi la flor nouvele" insofar as there is no narrative introduction. At the same time, however, it has a structural affinity to the love chansons in the existence of an initial statement of the man's love-longing. Just as in our French example, the words of the man alternate with those of the girl, stanza for stanza, except that the first two stanzas are devoted entirely to the man. The man thus speaks in stanzas 1,2,4,6, and 8, the girl in stanzas 3, 5, 7, and 9. Formally, the girl has the last word. However, the context of the poem makes it clear that the man has triumphed, and in anticipation of what is to follow it can be said that the poem begins on the perspective of the man, and ends when the girl has accepted his perspective. A third way in which this poem is similar to the French one is that the man and girl are characterized through the style of their speech. The characters in the English poem are, however, quite different from those in the French one, both in their individual characterization and in their relationship to each other. We have already noted that the man's one-dimensional thinking characterized the evolution of events in the French poem. The English poem is fundamentally different in that it does not report a rape; nothing of a physical nature happens at the time of the discussion. In the dialogue itself the personal integrity of both man and woman are respected. It thus evolves credibly in two different minds. The scholar's arguments are neatly aligned to his purpose, any change in the girl's mood being carefully taken into account, while the girl's replies comes straight from the heart and lay bare her momentary disposition.

The man's approach seems calculated insofar as it is very gradual, as if feeling its way. In stanza 1, we hardly know that he is in dialogue, unless we see the words "to wham shal y me mene" as a careful preparation of a direct address. In stanza 2, reference to the girl is first made in the pronoun of the third person, "he" before the man talks directly to her: "Whet helpeþ þe, my suete lemmon, my lyf þus forte gaste?" By making the girl seem responsible for his unfortuante situation, he is effective in making her feel defeated from the start.

The girl refuses to quarrel with him and pledges rather dramatically that she will never grant him her love. In so doing, she is really hiding behind rather stereotyped and set principles, but her own imagination takes control of her mind nonetheless. She refers to her virginal chamber--"ȝef þou in my boure art take, shame þe may bityde"--indicative, perhaps, of the direction her feelings are taking. In her argument she makes use of a proverb, in which the symbols of a "wycked" horse and riding the horse immediately bring to mind the kind of sexual connotation she tries to avoid.

The young man finally succeeds in overcoming her rather weak defences through his flattery, complaints and threats of dying of unrequited love. In her reply, the girl comes to the basis of her refusal: she does not want him to be taken in the act and beaten up by her family. As in stanza 3, she describes this possible catastrophe as taking place in her chamber. But, whereas in stanza 3, she seemed to be threatening the young man with this possibility, here she seems to be rather concerned for his well-being. She has now in fact admitted to loving him. At this point we learn an important piece of additional information, which is that the young man already has a bad reputation in the girl's family, and they might possibly kill him if they found him with their daughter. This point is exactly the middle of the poem.

As in "Quant voi la flor nouvele," the middle constitutes the turning-point of the action. The clerk seizes the opportunity of reminding the girl of their former love for each other, since her speech has portrayed her own train of thoughts. This turn to the past is nevertheless carefully prepared, beginning with some obligatory wailing. He then reflects that his fortunes have turned from good to bad, and having thus focused the attention on himself, he suddenly shifts from common-place rhetoric to reminiscing about their previous romance.

The recollection of kisses in a window does more than touch the girl's memory; it also explains to us the nature of their love. Those kisses, it would appear, were stolen ones, while she stood inside, he outside the window. Under such circumstances, their love could not have gone further than the girl herself maintained. Such a situation requires careful handling on the part of the young man, if he is not to foil his plans with the use of the wrong word at the wrong time. He cleverly drops the memory which he has evoked, submerging it in the generality of another proverb--"feir biheste makeþ mony mon al is serewes mythe." Despite its abstract quality, the proverb has an emotive potential. While abandoning the intensity of his persuasion, the young man still entreats her, through the words of the proverb, to be benevolent.

The girl speaks of her memories explicitly, and as if they were painful to her. Both her sorrow and her love she describes in the third person, as she does the man whom she loved. She says she loved him "Par amours," by which she probably means a refined sort of love in the courtly tradition. She calls him a faithful lover. She tells the full story of their romance--they met almost daily, and he was dejected when they did not meet. She admits that she loved him more than her own life. What is so strange in her words is that she does not seem to communicate any longer with her partner in dialogue, but seems to descend into her own feelings, as if talking to herself. But at the end of the stanza she comes back to reality--"whet bote is hit to leze?"

The clerk does not attack her directly, but describes his own painful separation from his love. He implores her to have pity, complains that he can talk no more, that in fact this is his last entreaty. At this final threat, the girl quickly abandons her former opposition, maintaining that her will is at one with his and against that of her family.

What follows from her relenting is not recorded by the poet. This fact has something to do with the nature of the lover. Unlike the French cavalier, the clerk, although he doubtless did not despise sexual intimacy, is deferential, accepting whatever his "lady" should grant him. This attitude is not as humble as it might seem, since it arises from the awareness that nothing can really be gained without the aquiescence of the maiden. He is searching for a spiritual as well as a physical union with the girl, and this objective is reached by allowing the girl to consent freely to his love. I would thus contend that the poem is as much about the art of persuasion as such as about the particular persuasion of a girl to consent to love. The young man is sure to be successful because of the girl's homage of studied rhetoric--"Þou semest wel to ben a clerc, for þou spekest so stille."

Surprisingly, the ethical framework of this poem shows a certain affinity with the Provençal love situation as reflected in Flamenca, although the swiftness of the dialogue and positon of the turning-point in the middle are like the French pastourelle. The attitudes of humility, charity and contemplation occur both in the English poem and in the Provençal romance. The clerk maintains an attitude of humility throughout the poem, and pity for his suffering is decisive in making the girl relent. Finally, the girl's self-delusion drops, and she empathizes with her lover. But, unlike the partners in "Quant voi la flor nouvele," both man and woman play an active role in the achievement of love in "De Clerico et Puella." On the other hand, the ethic of the English poem is similar to that of the French poem, and unlike Flamenca, insofar as the clerk's humility is based on rhetoric and is essentially superficial. The higher stages of love awareness, charity and contemplation are attained only by the girl, the clerk remaining objective and calculating, as detached as the French cavalier. The difference between the two on this level is that the English poem is less violent and more playful, more witty than coldly rationalizing.

To conclude, "De Clerico" is more episodic in structure than are the French poems, and less idyllic, or picturesque. The girl is more fully realized a character than is the girl in "Quant voi la flor nouvele," not so much an extension of the man's own love longings. Because she makes her own decisions, even though it is the decision to submit, she becomes a protagonist equal to that of the man. She is a person, rather than an animated image. The poem establishes narrative links to the past and speculates on the future in a technique of flash-backs, of fearful imaginings, and of the undepicted results of the girl's relenting. Despite the condensing of the narrative, the effect of this episodic manner is to portray what is really a conventionally long courtship. Yet, at the same time, the spontaneity of their love lifts it out of the temporal level of a lengthy romance. What gives beauty to the episodic, almost picaresque portrayal is the fine technique of the dialogue within the disciplined symmetry of the cyclical form. This brings me to the most important point in the development of the poem; the form we have been studying has freed itself from a direct correspondence of technique and content. No longer does the specific structure require the theme of superlative love as it does in the French ballad. In its episodic nature, the new ballad form can choose for its content a wide variety of episodic events, so long as these events depict a decisive moment in human life.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter Five

[1] Sandison, The "Chanson d'aventure" in Middle English.

[2] The text of "De Clerico et Puella" is taken from The Harley Lyrics: The Middle English Lyrics of MS. Harley 2253, ed. G.L. Brook, Old and Middle English Texts (Manchester: University Press, 1958), No. 24.

CONCLUSION

In my study, I have explored several structural and thematic aspects of a select group of Provençal, Old French and English poems which suggest a generic pattern and a pre-ballad form. One must use the term "genre study" in this context advisedly, not because the term is in itself incorrect, but because it has tended to presuppose a certain formal categorizing of a large body of poems. Such has not been my method, and for specific reasons. Genres have, to some extent, already been identified, so that the poems under discussion have previously been classified, for example, as _chansons de la mal-mariée_, _pastourelles_, and _chansons d'histoire_. Such categories have proven to be both too vast, in particular in the case of the _pastourelle_, and, by the opposite token, too narrow, so that the common features between certain examples of each genre has not previously been brought into focus. It has been my intention to avoid such a rigid understanding of genre, and to advoccate, in its place, a recognition of the fluidity of the forms under discussion. It is precisely this fluidity which has allowed the early outlines of a ballad-type poem to emerge. A major part of my study has been devoted to identifying those areas of experimentation with form which, at one and the same time, break down the rigid outlines of

Medieval genre studies, and enable a ballad form to emerge. For an approach of this sort, I have chosen to examine a Provençal dancing song, a resumé dancing song, which is incorporated in the romance of Flamenca, a chanson d'histoire from the romance of Guillaume de Dôle, a carole, two chansons de la mal-mariée, and two examples of pastourelle, one of them an early English poem of the ballad type. However, in keeping with my approach to genre study, I have not dwelt on those points which the poems have in common with other examples of their so-called genres, but have explored the structures and the themes of the poems in order to understand how important the round structure and the blend of narrative, dialogue and description, characteristic of the ballad, are in their overall composition. While at first glance, this mixture often seems to indicate a lack of poetic control, it became obivious through an examination of all the texts that the ballad structure is a consciously applied technique. The resulting poetic form, although it has been developed to an almost esoteric degree of perfection, is easily adapted to a variety of themes.

Where does such an approach lead us? Certainly, the work which I have undertaken is, in many ways, an experiment, because my conclusions have by necessity been tentative, and my goal has been to indicate a new direction, rather than to prove a certain formal step in literary development. My hope is that the observations I have been able to make will throw new light both on the study of early ballad forms, and on the study of Medieval French and Provençal poetics. The period under discussion, roughly the thirteenth century, can be seen as a period of experimentation. It should be possible to widen the circle and to examine many more poems where this structure is to be found.

I have stated that the most important characteristic of this emerging "genre," is the fluidity of form and content, from which, however, a high degree of correlation between the two is evident. The adaptability and flexibility of the form stands in relation to the idea of the locus amoenus, a perfect and secluded landscape or place, exempt from the encroachment of exterior impulses or a continuing narrative. Essential to the locus amoenus, even in the earliest ballad-type songs, is the appearance of a conflict which motivates dialogue and narrative development. It is the paradox of conflict in a "perfect" setting or landscape that sets in motion the dynamics of formal and thematic development.

Circular form and love conflict, albeit in the poet's own mind, are a main characteristic of the troubadour lyric, and the early ballad therefore can be said to stand in formal relation to the love chanson. This relationship is supported chronologically and thematically, in that the ballad-type song which is considered to be the oldest extant example of the kind, "A l'entrade del tens clar," is composed in the Provençal language and consists of typical troubadour vocabulary.

The first step in the further development of the form probably occurred when it was transmitted to northern France in the beginning of the thirteenth century. Maintaining the general principles of the *locus amoenus* and circularity, the ballad form is represented at that point by the *chanson d'histoire*, which develops a story at the expense of axial symmetry, and by the *rondeau de carole*, where axial symmetry is highly developed, but which lacks conflict entirely.

That the round form and its structural autonomy is only partly understood at that stage is evident from the fact that the first of these poems are promoted in the protective ambiance of the romance of *Guillaume de Dôle*. Jean Renart, the author of the romance and first known promoter of these songs, also added to the genre the idea that it had grown out of an old French vernacular tradition and, with reference in particular to the *carole*, that it was created communally and spontaneously. What distinguishes these notions from similar ones that have monopolized the studies of the later ballad is that Jean Renart consciously places them in the utopia of an idealized national past.

No other poetic form was suited better to the fiction of a tradition limited to a particular nation than the circular poem, one that is built on the idea of its own logical autonomy. Paradoxically, one could also venture to say that, the oldest group of ballads of any size being French, the genre was created precisely through the meeting of the French and Provençal cultures.

Two things seem to have occurred in the further development of the French form. While the poems in Jean Renart's collection exclude the elements of jealousy, adultery and marital conflict, all essential to the circular balance of "A l'entrade," later French poems take up these notions and, at the same time, show a higher development of axial symmetry than the early chanson d'histoire. It is amazing that the formal dynamics of the genre continue thus to work in the direction set by their Provençal origin, although Provençal culture had at that point fallen victim to the oppression from the north. This speaks for an interpenetration of the two cultures on several levels, similar to the contact between France and England, which for a century became the centre of French intellectual and literary life.

The close intellectual relationship between France and England may be the reason why De Clerico et Puella is structurally so close to the French poems, and why

English ballads with the pastourelle and mal-mariée themes carry on a nearly unchanged tradition into the fifteenth century.

With the appearance of the pastourelle theme, a further step is taken in the development of the ballad. It becomes thematically more flexible with the narrative and dramatic possibilities inherent in the pastourelle situation. In "Quant voi la flor nouvele" this leads to an amazing combination between a highly accomplished round form and a very crude story. It may be impossible to establish a historical connection between these poems and later ballads, but we are now thematically close to their poison, murder and love dramas.

Why did I not include other languages and cultures in this study as well? My aim, as I have already noted, is not to provide a complete survey of all possible influences, but to point out a direction of study, and for that purpose I have chosen the language and cultural areas where the contacts were the closest and the transformations most startling. Just as further studies should be able to include a larger body of poetic forms where this sort of structural basis can be found, so should they look further afield, to the poetry of, for instance, Italy and Spain. England was the obvious place to conclude my study, because of the implications of the ballad form, but further studies could look to other countries for developments in this area, as well.

Is it then legitimate to call these poems ballads? We have noted that the name suggests a connection with the verb ballar, to dance. Yet there is no evidence of physical dance, either for the carole or for the longer narrative poems. Only in "A l'entrade" could there be some indication of a dance accompaniment, suggested by the refrain and by the structure in general. For that reason, I have devoted some attention to the metrical analysis of that poem alone. Beyond that, however, the dance may be seen as a structural principle in at least some of these poems through the presence of the locus amoenus, and through the symmetrical arrangements and balanced circularity of the poems.

More important, however, than the actual connection between the ballad and a physical dance, is the methodological connection between these poems and the later ballad. One result of my study is the establishing of a sufficient connection between these Medieval poems and the ballad so that they may be grouped together in discussions and collections, rather than divided into separate categories, such as those of the mal-mariée, and pastourelle, and the chanson d'histoire. It is to be hoped that more evidence might come forth to establish more firmly the generic links, and possibly to elucidate further the connection between ballad and the dance, but it is important to deal first with the texts as we have them, not to wait for evidence which may never be forthcoming.

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